COMMENTARY

SOCIAL SECURITY UNDER THE UNION LABEL?

Labor's Welfare Drive and the Fair Deal

A. H. RASKIN

ONE of the most reassuring aspects of our democracy is the frequency with which constructive results emerge from the most extraordinarily muddled situations. That is what is happening in social security at a time when many experts in the field were beginning to despair that the country would ever put its social insurance programs on any kind of rational basis.

A sound system of social security is fundamental to the success of the Fair Deal "welfare state." If governmental programs for the aged, the unemployed, and the sick are inadequate, the same urges that prompt popular support for the mildly socialistic measures of Roosevelt and Truman turn to more radical modes of expression. If the combined weight of governmental and private programs becomes too great for the economy to sustain, there is a similar tendency on the part of many people to put their trust in totalitarian solutions.

The importance that social security has assumed was best illustrated by the willingness of a half-million steelworkers to stay out on strike for six weeks to win "non-contributory" pensions. The steelworkers not only sacrificed to pensions and social insurance their hopes of a fourth-round wage increase; they wiped out any fifth-round pay rise as well, for their new contracts rule out any upward adjustment of wages before 1951. The same pattern is being followed in most other mass-production industries.

The trade union drive for pensions and welfare programs would never have developed if the federal Social Security Act had been reasonably adequate. There has been only one basic liberalization of the Act since it was adopted in 1935, and that was concerned more with benefits for widows and children than with larger payments for workers. As a result, nearly fifteen years after the United States embarked on its great experi-

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IN THE last wave of strikes in coal and steel, the familiar headlines and the presence of such well-known figures as John L. Lewis, Philip Murray, and Eugene Grace, obscured for many the fact that a new kind of struggle was taking place —this time not for higher wages or shorter hours but for union welfare benefits. And fewer still sensed its important bearing on the whole social security program of the Fair Deal. Here A. H. RASKIN attempts to describe the recent conflict in the perspective of this larger issue, and suggests that labor's victory may have drawbacks as well as advantages in terms of the long-range movement to achieve security for the American population. One of America's most highly-regarded journalists in the labor field, Mr. Raskin was born in Edmonton, Canada, in 1911, and was graduated from the City College of New York; during the war he served with the army as a labor relations officer. His article "All-Out War on the Production Front" appeared in the June 1948 COMMENTARY.

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ment in making old age self-respecting, the average worker retiring under the federal old-age insurance program is entitled to the munificent sum of twenty-seven dollars a month. This is just about half what the same worker would receive in old-age relief in most states if he reached the age of sixty-five without having worked a day in his life.

To qualify for relief, all the aged applicant has to do is prove he has no independent resources. To qualify for old-age insurance, he and his employer must have paid taxes on his earnings through all of the worker's years of covered employment.

Two factors have stood in the way of pushing the insurance benefit schedule higher. One was the war, which caused Franklin D. Roosevelt to retire "Dr. New Deal" (without social security) and enthrone "Dr. Win the War" (who managed to hang around without serious challenge for a year or two after the shooting stopped). The other major factor before, during, and after the war, was the resistance of employers and employer-minded economy advocates in Congress to any expansion in social security costs. Their pressure was so successful that increases in payroll taxes, projected in the original legislation, were repeatedly scrapped. This meant the program was getting smaller, rather than bigger, despite overwhelming evidence that it had been too modest to start with.

Curiously, both of the factors that operated to prevent more ample governmental benefits—war and employer economy-mindedness—gave impetus to the movement to provide social security under the union label. Before the war, union welfare funds built up through employer contributions were extremely rare. There was nothing new about union interest in providing insurance or annuities for members: this was a principal function of many early unions, especially in the railroads. But these funds were financed by the workers themselves.

The employer-paid welfare fund got its big boost during the war, when the National War Labor Board found it a handy device for getting around the limitations of the "Little Steel" formula. Under the formula, cash wages were not supposed to go up more than fifteen per cent. Many employers, flush with profits and eager to hold or attract skilled workers, entered into union agreements that provided health, hospitalization, or retirement benefits at the boss's expense. The WLB put its stamp of approval on most such agreements as not inconsistent with the general wage-stabilization effort.

The garment unions, which had got into the welfare field through pioneering unemployment and vacation collections on an industry-wide basis, were the first to win comprehensive programs covering large sections of their membership. But it remained for John L. Lewis to hammer out the most ambitious and most universal program of all. Whether he did it as part of a design for the coal industry or as another expression of his zeal to outdo his friend-turned-enemy, Philip Murray, is a matter of some debate.

When it came time for Lewis to negotiate a contract for his four hundred thousand soft-coal miners in April 1946, Murray's United Steel Workers and other unions in the CIO had succeeded in establishing eighteen and one-half cents an hour as the "pattern" for the first round of postwar wage increases. It did not matter what the particular circumstances might be in an individual industry, its employes could look forward to getting eighteen and one-half cents, no more and no less.

To follow meekly in another's footsteps is not a course that appeals to the bellicose president of the United Mine Workers. To follow in Murray's footsteps is unthinkable. Accordingly, he determined to hold out for something better than the "pattern." The employers decided to do some holding out on their own account. This led to a strike, government seizure of the mines, and eventual signing of the Krug-Lewis agreement, which set up the UMW retirement and welfare fund on the basis of a royalty of five cents on every ton of coal mined.

The following year the mine owners, led by Benjamin F. Fairless of the United States Steel Corporation, largest of the "captive"

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operators, and George M. Humphrey of the Pittsburgh-Consolidation Coal Company, largest of the commercial operators, regained possession of their mines by increasing the welfare royalty to ten cents a ton. In 1948 the royalty went up to twenty cents, and this year Lewis is striving to raise it to thirty cents.

LEWIS'S achievement made it certain that unions in the other basic and mass-production industries would press for similar gains for their members unless the federal program were expanded. However, in 1947 and 1948 most unions were so busy trying to keep wages in step with the rising cost of living that they had to defer pressure for welfare funds.

This year the cost of living has leveled off, removing the main prop from the union's wage argument. Moreover, in the early months of the year, when the unions were preparing their collective bargaining demands, shrinking consumer demand and rising unemployment made it appear that the days of big profits were coming to an end. With higher wages unlikely to command much popular support, and with social security demonstrably inadequate, this seemed to be the year for the big push on welfare programs.

In the cases of Murray and Walter P. Reuther, president of the United Automobile Workers, the desire to win pensions and social insurance for their rank and file was accented by intense personal experiences. Murray, near death of a stomach ailment at the beginning of the year, emerged from the hospital convinced that the most meaningful task to which he could dedicate himself was the provision of decent safeguards for steel workers against the trials of ill health and old age. Reuther was similarly affected by his own long incapacitation after an assassin's attempt on his life, and kept thinking how impossible it would have been for any wage-earner to meet the medical bills involved without mortgaging himself for a dozen lifetimes.

President Truman, in the meantime, had given the employers a possible out by sponsoring an all-embracing plan for the amendment of social security. This included a rise of almost one hundred per cent in old-age benefits, broadening of coverage to self-employed persons, farmers, domestics, and other exempt groups, and the introduction of health insurance. Had industry put its weight behind speedy passage of this program, it would have had a defense against the union argument that employers were obligated to do what the government had failed to do in providing for workers in old age or sickness.

Industry had tried to close the door to this argument by denying that it had any such obligation except to the extent that it voluntarily chose to assume it. Instead of taking steps to see that there were fewer gaps in the governmental security structure, industry took the negative course of arguing that pensions and social insurance were not matters within the scope of collective bargaining. The National Labor Relations Board ruled in favor of the unions on this point, but the steel and automobile industries did not concede until they had carried the fight to the Supreme Court. Even then employers found a legalistic basis for refusing to talk pensions this year: they contended that the reopening clauses of their contracts barred any right to strike over retirement provisions in steel, electrical manufacturing, and other industries.

They might have made this argument stand up if they had been willing to grant concessions in other phases of bargaining, but the unions refused to accept a blanket turndown on all points in the contract as a proper settlement for their fourth-round demands. United States Steel offered to increase its outlay for social insurance to two and one-quarter cents an hour, but refused to go beyond this, even though steel output and profits remained high. Other employers offered nothing at all.

With a half-dozen major unions poised to strike, the President staved off a showdown in July by setting up a special fact-finding board to make recommendations for settlement of the dispute in steel. This board rejected the union's wage demand *in toto* and

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shaved down its total "package" from thirty cents an hour to ten cents: six cents was to be provided by employers for pensions, and four cents for social insurance.

The board laid down the principle that industry had an obligation to take up the slack where government security was insufficient. Where government provided nothing, as in the case of health and hospital insurance, the full responsibility passed to industry. These findings were based on a general belief that "depreciation of the human machine" should be as much a charge on industry as maintenance and replacement of plant equipment.

Recognizing that the sums it awarded might not be substantial enough to buy all the protection workers might want, the board specified that it would be perfectly proper for the union and the steel companies to bargain for larger programs in which the workers would shoulder part of the cost. It also specified that each company be given an opportunity in collective bargaining to show why the ten cent "package" should not apply in its case.

The union promptly announced its acceptance of the report. The industry, under the leadership of United States Steel, denounced it as "revolutionary" and "socialistic." After much pulling and hauling, the companies got around to offering the ten cents on condition that their employes make a supplementary contribution of roughly five cents from their own pay envelopes. This was unacceptable to the union, and the matter went to a strike on what both sides regarded as an issue of principle.

Ostensibly, the issue was whether employers should pay the whole bill for pensions and social insurance or whether workers should share the cost. Unfortunately, when analyzed in terms of principle, this issue did not stand scrutiny on either side.

THERE were obvious weaknesses in the industry's position. Andrew Carnegie had introduced a non-contributory pension program in 1901 that was carried over as the standard for all of United States Steel ten years later. This program, which antedated the CIO steel union by thirty-five years, was continued until 1940, with the company paying all the costs. Bethlehem Steel and Jones and Laughlin kept their non-contributory programs in full force to the time of the strike and beyond.

As if this were not enough to undercut any stand on principle, virtually all the companies, including United States Steel, had non-contributory retirement plans for their top executives, with benefits running as high as $110,000 a year. United States Steel explained without a blush that its non-contributory plan affected only three executives and was not intended as a pension system but as a deferred compensation plan to get around the tax laws.

The position of the steel companies was further weakened by their continued payment of non-contributory pensions and welfare benefits to the workers in their "captive" coal mines. The companies contended that this should not count against them because the government had let down the bars to Lewis in the first place; but this failed to explain away their subsequent agreement, without any governmental pressure, to quadruple the original scale of royalty payments.

If, as the industry argued, the safety of the American way of life depended on workers saving up for their own future security, then the industry itself had been guilty of subversive activity for nearly half a century. Actually, the industry's concern was more a matter of hard cash than of principle. It feared that there would be no limit on union pressure for increased pensions unless workers knew that every time they got more they themselves would have to pay more. In industry's judgment, putting industrial pensions on a contributory basis represented the only way to keep benefits from going through the roof.

The union's stand on principle also had a couple of shaky supports. For one thing, it was contemplated from the start that the one-hundred-dollar monthly pension to be provided by the employer would include the regular federal old-age insurance benefit. This meant that part of the pension—about

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thirty dollars a month in the case of the average steel worker—would be financed on a fifty-fifty basis, thus taking a good deal of steam out of the argument that employers had to pay the full cost.

More important, the union maintained—with cause—that the workers were really paying the entire cost of the ten cent package inasmuch as they had foregone a pay increase to get the pensions and insurance. What was happening, according to Murray, was that the workers were striking to get a dime more in welfare benefits instead of a dime more in their pay envelopes. In either case, he contended, it was the worker's money, not the employer's, that was involved. This made the union's argument—that industry should pay the entire bill—self-canceling. The only part of the bill that industry was paying, if the union's own version of the financing was accepted, was its one per cent payroll tax for social security. In the light of this approach, the relevant question became not *whether* the worker should pay, but *how much* he should pay to guarantee adequate benefits.

As the strike went into its fifth week, Bethlehem Steel broke the industry's united front and entered into an agreement with the union that provided for "non-contributory" pensions (except for the worker's share of social security) and for contributory social insurance. The company's contribution to the combined program was estimated at from twelve to fourteen cents an hour. The workers put in an additional two and one-half cents an hour for hospitalization, sick benefits, life insurance, and other welfare benefits.

It is noteworthy that Bethlehem should have been the pacesetter in working out a peaceful settlement with the union. In the "Little Steel" strike of 1937 and in the years that preceded the war, its plants were the scene of bitter battles in which management used every weapon to keep the union out. This year, in common with the rest of the industry, Bethlehem made no effort to operate, even though its officials contended that its workers were overwhelmingly opposed to the strike. When Eugene G. Grace, the corporation's crusty chairman, was asked whether Bethlehem contemplated a back-to-work movement of the type it had fostered in the early years of the CIO, he replied with no hint of regret that the days of strikebreaking were over. The only way to settle strikes was by orderly, intelligent negotiation, not by setting up rival battlelines, Grace observed. It was the death of an era, but no one seemed to mind its passing.

Within two weeks the rest of the industry settled on the Bethlehem terms. Ford did not wait. It adopted a similar program for its employes in September. Milk drivers in New York, rubber workers in Dayton, farm equipment workers in Chicago, signed contracts embodying the same kind of protection. The die is cast for most of American industry. It is only a matter of time until the pattern is extended to millions of additional workers in offices, factories, and warehouses throughout the country.

WHAT are the implications of this Topsy-grown structure born of the shortcomings of federal social security and the desire of many employers to bypass wartime wage controls as a means of holding their labor force? Do the new programs represent a trustworthy support for our total security, or do they stand in the way of rounded protection for all the people under governmental auspices?

The first thing to recognize is that the setting up of separate pension programs on the basis of individual companies or even of individual industries tends to freeze workers to their jobs. A worker's protection ends when he leaves the company or leaves the industry, whether the departure is of his own choosing or not. In most industrial systems he builds up no equity or transfer rights. In a period of shifting technology this may prove tragic both in social and personal terms. A fluid labor market, with people free to move from one industry to another as labor requirements expand or contract, has been a mainstay of our industrial progress. With atomic energy on the horizon, the need for fluidity may prove even greater in the future.

The steel and automobile agreements are

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much more restrictive in this respect than the earlier welfare programs in coal and men's and women's clothing. Under the new agreements, each company has its own program and a worker moving from one company to another has to start from scratch. In the coal and garment funds, a worker may change employers as often as he likes without forfeiting his right to pension and welfare payments; the only restriction is that he must stay within the industry. The operation of union seniority rules has already put curbs on the mobility of American labor; private pension programs will make it even harder to induce shifts of employment in periods of national emergency.

The second major drawback involved in the movement toward industrial pensions is the instability that characterizes private funds. The country has already had two graphic illustrations of the disillusionment and heartache that come when workers who have relied on private funds for security in their old age find the money is not there to supply the benefits they were promised.

In the railroad industry, the Stock Exchange crash and the collapse of the Florida real estate boom sent the private insurance and retirement programs for railworkers toppling in the early 30's. The government had to meet the situation by establishing the Railroad Retirement Board, which pays pensions three times as large as those provided under the Social Security Act.

In the coal industry Lewis has demonstrated anew what must happen to a private fund when it operates on a "pay-as-you-go" basis, with more money going out than coming in. The Lewis fund would have run into difficulties much earlier if the operators had not tied it up in litigation long enough to allow it to pile up a sizable reserve. But when he did get the green light, Lewis authorized benefits so lavishly that outgo exceeded collections by more than seventy-five per cent. Before the trustees of the fund voted to suspend further payments in mid-September, the fund was distributing eleven million dollars a month in benefits and taking in a little more than six million dollars in royalties. Lewis got the retirement age down from sixty-five to sixty and paid his pensioners one hundred dollars a month, exclusive of social security. When the money ran out he was in the process of organizing a medical program that would have extended all the protection of health insurance, plus unlimited specialized care, to miners and their families.

THERE was nothing wrong with what Lewis was trying to do, except that he could not pay for it. The only security he was able to put behind his program was his confidence that he could always wrest from the mine operators all the money that would be required. When he found himself unable to deliver, the only course he could follow was to cut off benefits. Even if he wins a larger royalty in this year's negotiations, his program is too grandiose to stay within the limits that will have to be set if coal is to remain a competitive fuel.

It is not to be expected that the welfare funds in other industries will take on the "pie-in-the-sky" quality of the Lewis adventure. But their dependence on private financing will give them a quicksand base that may swallow them up in periods of depression. This would be particularly true of funds involving employes of a single company, but it could prove equally true of area-wide or even industry-wide funds in an acute economic upheaval. Workers might find their jobs, pensions, and insurance swept away. This is not the kind of security that provides insurance for our social order.

Perhaps the most important disadvantage, however, is the fact that the industrial systems set up preferred groups within the working population instead of providing basic protection for all workers in all industries. If our future progress were confined to security programs for workers in unionized industries alone, millions of other workers would lose out through stagnation of the Federal social security structure.

Inter-union rivalries increase the danger that benefits will be pushed too high for individual industries to support. Conversely, there is the danger, from the union point of

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view, that funds limited to single companies will become avenues for the development of company unionism. Workers, worried about the soundness of their pension investment, may be more disposed to see the company's side of an argument than is considered good form for a militant trade unionist. This may make for more harmonious labor-management relations, but few unions are likely to welcome it as a firm foundation for union security.

IT SEEMS inescapable that if we are to have maximum protection against insolvency, excessive rigidity in the labor market, and the other dangers inherent in private welfare programs, we will have to put our major reliance on the governmental social security system and its tributaries at the state and local level. Under a federal plan, broadened to cover all gainfully employed persons, a worker receives retirement credit for all the wages he receives (up to the statutory limit) in all industries. He is not chained to a single employer or a single field of endeavor as a condition of maintaining his pension.

A federal program does not, of course, automatically assure that our social security structure will be financially sound, but the chances that the government will have to renege on its pension commitments are less than in the case of any private employer. The great virtue of a public social security system is that it permits intelligent planning of the over-all obligations that we are loading on our economy in the name of social security. With a hodge-podge of public and private plans, no one can calculate what part of our national income is being set aside for pensions, unemployment insurance, relief to needy adults and children, and health and hospital services.

It is just as important to be sure that we are not spending too much of our productive energy on protecting ourselves against the hazards of life as to know we are not spending enough. The foreseeable cost of the federal old-age insurance system, as revised by the new Truman proposals, is seven per cent of payrolls. Unemployment insurance, with allowance for merit-rating reductions in employer payments, comes to about two per cent. A full-blown program of health and disability insurance would add as much as ten per cent to the outlay, bringing the total of plans now contemplated close to twenty per cent of our national payroll. That means all of us would be working one hour out of five to pay for our insurance.

This does not take into account the extra charges that would be involved in reductions in the retirement age or shortening of the work week. Under these circumstances, it becomes doubly important to know what our whole bill for social security is. The welfare plan just set up in steel will cost nine or ten per cent of payrolls, without taking into account the normal social security contributions of the industry's workers and employers. In coal the proportion is about the same. It need hardly be emphasized that the great bulk of these expenditures is passed on to the public in the form of increased costs of production and increased prices.

DESPITE the rapid spread that is taking place in the industrial programs, there is basis for hope that the main emphasis in social security will return where it belongs—to the governmental program. This hope stems from a development in the Ford and Bethlehem pension programs that puts them on a different footing from the pensions in coal. The steel and automobile plans provide that the amount of the benefits to be provided by the employer is to go down in inverse proportion as federal social security goes up.

In coal there is no relation between the industrial pension and social security. The miner (when and if the fund resumes payment) gets one hundred dollars a month from the United Mine Workers' pension fund. What he gets in addition from the government is gravy. The steel and auto workers would like to have won a similar arrangement for their members, but the country may count itself fortunate that they did not. Under the arrangement Murray and Reuther were obliged to accept, employers

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now have for the first time a tangible incentive for putting pressure behind liberalization of the Social Security Act. The larger the pensions the government provides, the smaller the pensions industry will have to pay for.

Accordingly, when the new Congress convenes in January big business is likely to be more eager than any other group to have the old-age insurance program expanded along the lines recommended by the President. The bill has already been approved by the House, and the Senate is expected to give it priority, especially if industry gets on the bandwagon in a big way. It is possible that the expanded federal benefits will become payable as early as July 1 if the Senate acts with sufficient speed.

Tying the social insurance phases of union contracts into the adoption of federal health measures would undoubtedly remove some of the obstructions that have stood in the way of this most controversial phase of the Fair Deal program. Enough pressure on the back door may unlock the front door to a well-conceived plan of health and hospital protection for all Americans. In this oblique way the unions will have performed a service of inestimable value to the entire community.

Scores of uncoordinated pension and insurance programs have already been established, but they are developing ties to the federal program that promise to make them part of the main current in the orderly flow of social security progress. They can now serve as a spur to more substantial benefits for all workers instead of a vehicle for special privileges for some workers at the expense of others. There will always be a place for specialized retirement and health plans in extra-hazardous industries, but they will have to be supplements to social security, not substitutes for it.

Deciding how much social security we can afford, and where this entire movement is leading in terms of our whole economic and political pattern, will be a difficult enough task if we get all our programs within a common framework. It is gratifying that we seem at last to be moving in that direction.

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THE ARABS OF ISRAEL

Pages from a Correspondent's Notebook

HAL LEHRMAN

RAMLEH (March 1949)—"Only six months," a Rumanian at the Bir Yaakov immigrant reception center sighed. "If only I had come six months earlier. My cousin, he went to Tiberias. Now he's a prince. He has an Arab villa, his own tailor shop, two helpers, a Garden of Eden nearly. For me there is a tent. Five weeks now, in a tent. This place here, it is called a 'transit camp.' So when is the transit? How long should a man with three children and a wife sit in a tent?" Some of the eight thousand others at Bir Yaakov, which I visited by taxi from my Tel Aviv base yesterday, are better off: they have, not a tent, but a few square feet in a wooden hut. In exchange, they are in "transit" as long as three months. Like the man with the lucky cousin in Tiberias, they share the dream of a Klondike of palaces and jobs in some wonderfully empty ex-Arab preserve. They don't know—fortunately, because they are already desperate enough—what I learned at Ramleh today, that the dream has nightmare edges.

In Ramleh, seven thousand Jewish immigrants have replaced fifteen thousand Arabs. I asked a newcomer how things were, and in three minutes I was the center of an angry protest meeting. Thin, haggard faces, stamped with memories of death camp and DP camp. For them the Promised Land—with its decrepit Arab hovels of mud and clay, its smell of stagnation, its overcrowding and underemployment—has lost its promise. Two days before I came, immigrants actually mobbed the office of the Labor Bureau because the jobs were fewer than the mouths that needed to be fed. . . . With the pressures of such a burden on Israel, the possibility of having to take back any large fraction of the half million Arabs who ran away is not a topic for calm conversation. A sufficient problem, most people feel, is the Arabs who remained—how to be fair and decent to them while Israel is stretching her meager economy to the limit and still not finding adequate work or housing for the Jews who keep pouring in without let, hindrance, or respite.

JAFFA (March)—There used to be about seventy-five thousand Arabs and twenty thousand Jews in this ancient town which rubs tattered elbows with modern Tel Aviv across the harbor. Today the Arabs number a little more than five thousand, the Jews have increased to seventy thousand. The Arabs are concentrated inside the small but neat Ajemi quarter. They live in a kind of reverse segregation; they need passes to go out, and Jews need passes to go in. We had to show our papers at the outer barricade, a row of barbed-wire barrels manned by young Jewish soldiers with light machine guns. The interior of the enclosure is policed by picked Arab constables. They have a Jewish commander. "All's quiet," said one of the barrel guards, a husky young *sabra* with blond hair and a ferocious "desert-rat" mustache. "Occasionally the houses are searched for Arab weapons, and a few old guns and pistols

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IT IS easy, amid all the discussion of the problem of the Arab refugees from Palestine—with seven-digit figures and large schemes occupying the center of the diplomatic stage—to forget the practical realities and the actual living relationships between Arabs and Jews that set the framework of the "Arab Problem." Here, in these pages from a correspondent's notebook, HAL LEHRMAN describes these intimate relations as they reveal themselves in Israel in their complex detail. Mr. Lehrman earlier (October 1949) reported on the larger issues of the Arab refugee problem as viewed in Washington and Tel Aviv, in the fourth of a series of articles that has been widely commended for its fair and balanced clarification of the problems besetting the development of the Jewish state. Mr. Lehrman has been a close student of Arab affairs since 1942, when, as head of the OWI in Turkey, he traveled back and forth between Istanbul and Cairo via Damascus, Beirut, and Jerusalem; in 1945 he attended the first meeting of the Arab League in Cairo.

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get picked up. But there's been no real trouble."

The Jaffa Sporting Club, pre-war rendezvous of the fashionable *effendi,* is now the Arab Workers' Club. It enjoys the auspices of the Palestine Labor League, an Arab affiliate which Histadrut, the Jewish Labor Federation, organized way back in 1927. The new tenants evidently have no use for the dancing pavilion or tennis courts, but out in back a few Arabs were listlessly kicking around a soccer ball. "Some day, *inshallah,*" grinned Gabriel Massri, club secretary, "we'll have a football team."

For the inevitable tiny tumbler of coffee Massri ushered us into his office, placarded with Histadrut slogans in Arabic. Under the British he was a clerk in the Palestine government's public works department. "I get along," he admitted, "but most of the other ex-civil servants among us have been eating up their savings. Our laborers are much better off. Pay of Arabs in the mandate port and sanitation services was a half-pound a day.

"When the Jews took over, they raised the minimum to I£1.25 [$3.75]. Now it's up to I£1.45 in the port. Some masons and carpenters get as high as I£2.40." "Are Arab and Jewish minimum rates the same?" "No, Jewish labor in the port starts at about two pounds. But remember," Massri leaned over eagerly, "the Jew pays from eight to ten pounds monthly in union dues, sick fund charges, rent, and so on; the Arab pays nothing. Just the same we're going to ask for equal pay—and equal obligations. We feel everything should be the same for everybody, regardless. Histadrut will back us when negotiations with the authorities begin. But we aren't in a hurry. It wouldn't do to raise Arab wages too fast. Our people wouldn't know how to use that much money or responsibility."

"Do you really think so?" I asked, inclining my head imperceptibly toward my uniformed Israeli companion while holding Massri's gaze. The Arab understood and laughed: "Oh, I say what I like in front of my Jewish friends." "Do your Arab friends feel as comfortable?" "They were frightened at first, but they feel much more secure now that the Jews haven't eaten them up. It would be better, of course, if ten thousand or so of Jaffa's Arabs could come back. The government says they'll talk about it after all the Arab countries have signed a peace with the Jews. I hope so. I hope so very much. I would feel better myself. . . ."

We drove back past some handsome villas. Unwashed urchins were gamboling over the grounds. "What did he mean about the Arabs not paying rent?" I asked. "They don't," said Captain Sorosh, my Israeli guide. "We gathered them up from all over and installed them in this section of Jaffa. The real owners disappeared over the frontier. We figure that takes care of the rent problem. If any landlord ever returns, he'll have some claim to the property, but his tenants won't owe him a thing. As a matter of fact some of the new occupants are also making a clear cash profit. They aren't used to the magnificence, so they rent it out to Jews who get a special permit to escape from the housing crisis in Tel Aviv. The Arabs live in the basement and bury the rent money in the garden."

VERY few Arabs in Israel are sitting as pretty as Jaffa's Arab proletariat. Most other Arab centers don't have ports which are a steady source of jobs at good pay. Not many laborers are in a position to be rewarded for letting out houses which don't belong to them. In general the Arab peasant, professional, and mercantile classes have lost the props of their existence. Even in Jaffa Arab trade and commerce are fast asleep. Former officials and clerks of the Mandatory are selling their last possessions. Israeli authorities have set aside four hundred dunams of land to grow vegetables because the prewar Arab food sources aren't even producing enough for the diminished native population.

The British departure, the war, and the Arab exodus destroyed the world the Arabs knew. You drive in any direction through the Israeli countryside and you find the landscape polluted with dead-silent Arab communities festering like carcasses in the sun, the houses disembowelled by explosion, blackened by fire, or rotted by neglect. I suppose there are a certain number of Arab places where life hasn't radically changed, but the only one I've seen so far is a village near Zikhron Yaakov, on the way to Haifa. The Arabs stayed put there despite the universal panic; they kept on tilling their land while the war passed them by; today their fields, homes, and way of life are intact. The

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place is aptly called Furaidis, which means Paradise. But there can be no paradise, or even purgatory, for their brethren who fled. It isn't merely the wrecked houses, uncultivated lands, lost livestock and tools, gutted shops, vanished merchandise. Even if these could somehow be restored, they could not survive without the great hinterland of Arab consumers which once was their market.

As for the places occupied by the immigrants, it seems politically and economically impossible to dispossess Jews who have nowhere else to go. Return of the Arab refugees would mean a reconstruction of their economy from the ground up, which I doubt the Israeli treasury could finance without vast outside assistance even if it wanted to. We keep hearing that most of the fugitives cooped up in Egyptian-held Gaza or along the frontiers of Israel's neighbors want to come home. If so, they seem to be inhabiting a dreamland all their own. I wonder how many of these Arabs know that their pattern of living has been torn up.

ACRE (April)—When I last visited all-Arab Acre in 1942, about fourteen thousand people lived here. Today this historic town is cut in two. The "New City" is all Jewish. Its community of four thousand started a half-year ago around a nucleus of two hundred Palestinian families, mostly veterans of the Arab war. Later settlers were recruited from the Hungarian, Rumanian, Bulgarian, and Moroccan immigrations. The "Old City," inside a guarded enclosure, contains some thirty-five hundred Arabs now. Nearly half of them are not from Acre at all, but refugees who never made it across the border. Practically all of them, and many of the old inhabitants, are on the United Nations' dole, administered in this area through the Quakers, who distribute the food purchased by international funds.

Don Peretz, only American Jew on the Quaker voluntary teams serving in and around Palestine, took time off from supervising the dole to walk me through the nearly empty streets. The Arabs here seem to be either very old or very young. Every Arab kid has a big grin and a *"shalom"* for his Jewish conquerors. (In 1942 it was a big grin and the V-sign for his British rulers.) The men just sit quietly in every patch of shade. Two out of every three stalls in the once-swarming bazaar are boarded shut. The only thing which hasn't changed is the cloud of flies over the meat impaled on hooks outside the butcher shops.

"You should have seen this place three months ago," Don said. "Not a shop was open. Now they're beginning again at the Nur match factory and the Spinney mineral-water works. That ought to make jobs for maybe two hundred Arabs. And an Arab-owned soap factory is getting a fresh start on a Histadrut loan. Here's a grocery cooperative run by Histadrut." An Arab clerk presided over the sparsely stocked shelves. He gave a tired shrug when I inquired if his job was satisfactory. "They pay me only twenty pounds [sixty dollars] a month. On that I feed my father, his two wives, my two brothers and my sister. We live in an empty four-room flat. The furniture was requisitioned by Jewish soldiers. I guess it's over in the New City now. In Haifa my family had a big house. But the British told us the Jews would cut our necks if we stayed. We can't go back. Our house is a Jewish house now."

Rashid Suleiman Ka'nan and his donkey came into Acre this morning with a special travel permit. He represents the four hundred members of Histadrut at Majd la-Kurum, twelve miles northeast of here. We invited each other to an outdoor café on the cobblestoned square. While a loudspeaker blared a musical Arabic lamentation, he explained that his mission was to plead for more food. "We are living mainly on provisions from before the war," he said. "The Quakers come and give oil, flour, and lentils once a month to the neediest cases. But we are all of us neediest cases.

"Here"—and he waved a long sheet of inky paper—"this is a list of the people who are asking for food. I have come to show this to the Jewish Military Governor." "Don't the Israeli authorities help too?" I asked. "Only with clothing. And with medicines. We have a government doctor. There is no bad sickness. But there is also no work. And also we have a great longing for our kinsmen who try to return home. Sometimes they make their way to us from what the Jews call 'the Triangle' [Arab-held territory in north-Central Palestine]. But when they are found out they are deported. They tell us it is good on the other side, but they wish to live with their own people again." "But if there isn't

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enough food even without them," I said, "how would you manage with so many extra mouths?" "The government must manage," replied Rashid Suleiman in surprise. "The government must make work. Is it not the *government* that is the master, and has it not promised work for all?"

NAZARETH (April)—Yussuf bey al-Farhoun, Mayor of Nazareth, is a different cut of Arab from most of his distinguished compatriots. Elsewhere in Palestine when news arrived that the Jews were approaching —creating something resembling a panic—the Arab leaders, the same who had been preaching holy war, were the first to run. But in Nazareth, Yussuf bey announced he was staying, and did. His constituents took heart from this example—and also from authenticated reports that their brethren who had fled from other places were finding, not *houris* and jugs of wine behind the Arab frontiers, but plain misery. In consequence Nazareth was one Arab community where the population actually increased: to the twelve thousand who were there in the beginning, sixty-five hundred were added from the flood of refugees who streamed through the city during the time of terror. Twenty-five thousand peasants sat tight in the surrounding villages too. I drove through the Valley of Jezreel yesterday and rediscovered around Nazareth a small portion of the Palestine which used to be: the fellahin and their oxen on the ploughed field, the drowsing shepherd and his browsing flock, the Biblical pastoral. The land looks prosperous and well-turned. The government of Israel has had a part in this—tons of wheat and barley seed distributed free to the Arab peasants, and low-interest loans to ten thousand Arab families to carry them over to the next harvest.

In Nazareth itself the Jewish authorities are apparently making a genuine try for the equality promised in their Declaration of Independence. The city, awarded to the Arab state by the UN, is occupied territory, but the military government seems to be keeping the administration as Arab as possible within security limits. Of the thirty-man police force, only ten are Jews. The school teachers are one hundred per cent Arab, and so are the postal services. Food Control has eight or ten Arabs and one Jew. The courts are all Arab, including the top magistrate, first Arab senior government officer to be appointed in Israel. The constables at the entrance to MG's headquarters were Arabs. The corridors swarmed with Arab clients lined up before the desks of Arab clerks. Even the secretary who escorted me to the door of the Military Governor was Arab. The first Jew I met in Nazareth was the Military Governor himself.

MAJOR Elisha Soltz, who looks and sounds like the *kibbutznik* he is, was troubled only by economic problems. "Before the war," he said, "the Arabs were supported by the tourist trade in Nazareth and by work in Haifa. Over there they found jobs in the oil refineries, the railways, the posts and telegraphs, the factories, the British military installations and the port. About eight hundred commuted the twenty-two miles to Haifa every day, and five hundred Nazareth Arabs lived in Haifa permanently. Nowadays, hardly one hundred from Nazareth have travel permits for Haifa. We are trying to spread out the work here—in the quarries, on public works, and odd jobs like olive-picking in abandoned Arab groves. If I could find employment for twenty-five hundred breadwinners, the Quakers, the Belgian relief people here, and I could all pack up and go home."

Major Soltz was not worried about the Communist situation, however. "Yes, they have good propagandists here, and some influence. But they are nowhere near a majority. Their one big advantage was that they had an Arab branch here, underground, which came out as soon as the Arab Army left Nazareth. They had a clear field until the Jewish parties could send Arab delegates in." But he laughed away the possibility that the Communists could keep growing on Arab discontent.

I went away musing over this remarkable optimism. The facts as I know them are that "Red Nazareth" gave the Communists some fifty per cent of its votes in Israel's first election last January, as against only 3.5 per cent collected by the Communists from the whole country. The local showing was all the more impressive because two-thirds of Nazareth's Arabs are Christians. The comrades here go piously to church with hammer-and-sickle badges pinned to their Sunday best. Last month, when a Catholic bishop from Belgium came here on a relief mission, the

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Communist Arabs (who are mostly Greek Orthodox) picketed him. Their placards read, "No Alms from the Church," and, with wonderful irrelevance, "Down with Warmongers Bevin and Léon Blum."

As soon as I walked into CP headquarters here, I felt on familiar ground. It is fantastic how alike such headquarters are, whether I find them in Copenhagen, in Bucharest, or in Arab Nazareth. The same tough characters downstairs, the same hard looks upstairs, the same jargon and doubletalk. Anyone who still has doubts about the international nature of the sect would find a world tour very educational.

The head man, Saliba Khamis, neglected to shake hands, nor did he introduce his politburo of four who flanked him at the table. Saliba, aged twenty-nine, wore slick Western clothes, a silk tie of loud American design, and doodled with a Sheaffer fountain-pen. No, he didn't know how many party-members Nazareth had. There were different organizations—the trade union section, the youth group, the women's federation, and so on—and he really had no idea how much they added up to. Why was there a separate Arab Communist workers' union? Because Histadrut's Palestine Labor League was dominated by one reactionary Jewish party (Ben Gurion's moderate socialist Mapai). What was the circulation of *al-Ittihad* ("Unity"), the Arabic Communist newspaper published out of Haifa? He had no notion at all. Why did the Communists call themselves the Arab Liberation League in Nazareth? In Israel, he said, there was the Israel Communist party, but Nazareth was Arab. Partition said so. It should be part of an Arab state. But if Nazareth had to stay in Israel, what was the party program? Repatriation of all refugees who wanted to return, complete compensation for property losses, total reconstruction of the Arab economy, restriction of Jewish immigration to the limits imposed by the weakness of the Israeli economy. When I wound up by asking him if he wouldn't be arrested and his party outlawed again as soon as Nazareth fell under Arab control, he declined to answer except by looking sternly at the door.

I understood now that the Communists had been able to get Arab votes by a nationalist appeal, promising the impossible. But this didn't seem sufficient, nor did it explain Major Soltz's tranquillity of soul. The rest of the puzzle fell into place at the local Histadrut office. My Arab informants asked me to withhold their names, but they spoke freely and angrily: "The military governor belongs to Mapam [the left-wing, pro-Soviet opposition to the moderate socialist coalition government]. All his chief aides are Mapamniks. Four times Soltz refused our application to open a Histadrut branch—until Tel Aviv itself gave permission. By then the Communists had grabbed a big following because they had the only employment office in the region. With Soltz's cooperation, they controlled all the available jobs. That's all the people wanted—jobs. They didn't mind being Communists if only it gave them work. They don't know what Communism means. They never heard of Stalin. We are finally operating our own employment office, but it's slow going. We had a telegram from Jaffa for forty mechanics; Soltz delayed with the travel permits until a Histadrut man came up specially from Tel Aviv. For a long time, Soltz wouldn't allow our secretary into MG headquarters. Do you know how to stop Communism among our people? Take away the restrictions on Arab travel. Give us jobs for them. There won't be ten Communists left in Nazareth. . . ."

[Later, in Tel Aviv, from an inside and high-up Mapainik: "We're on to the Mapam game. They thought they could maybe win the Arab Liberation League over to their side, and they were even willing to help it as a Communist outfit, just so they could keep the Arabs from coming to us. The first nice opportunity, Comrade Soltz will get his walking papers."]

Sa'sa (April)—This is an "American" kibbutz, at a strategic mountain crossroad on the Lebanese frontier. Twenty-five of its members come from Canada, four from Mexico, two from Panama, and the remaining sixty-seven from the United States. The colony started in January adjacent to evacuated Arab Sa'sa. One's first impression is the penetrating smell of stagnant water—from the layers of Arab villages built one on top of the other for centuries. Another odd note is the sight of Arabs toiling in a Jewish kibbutz. "It's our manpower shortage," said Aryeh Greenfield, twenty-four, late of Chicago. "We 'inherited' olive groves, fig trees, and vineyards all around here. Before the

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Arabs took off, they must have had five hundred working here. When we dig all the rocks out, we'll do intensive and efficient farming. But meanwhile the land has to be looked after or the fruit will go bad for years. And there are only ninety-eight of us. So we hire any native help we can find."

Every "legal" Arab holds an Israeli identity card. It establishes his right to be in the country, and weeds out the illegal infiltrees. But, according to Greenfield, it's impossible to plug the border here. Arab Sa'sa actually has land on the Lebanese side. These Galileean hills are a traditional smugglers' highway. It was a supply route for Fawzi al-Kawukji's irregulars early in the war. Stray Arabs turn up at the kibbutz every day and are handed over to the Israeli military, but Greenfield guesses three times that many filter past toward the South.

INFILTRATION is also especially brisk from the Negev and Jerusalem. In a pre-election census last November, sixty-nine thousand Arabs were counted in Israeli-held territory. The number has now risen to at least one hundred and fifty thousand. Of these, only about ten thousand were obtained by favorable adjustments of the armistice frontier with King Abdullah's troops. That makes no less than seventy thousand unauthorized Arabs in only five months. "We cannot assert categorically," an Israeli spokesman has privately told me, "that these people are all being deliberately sent in to stand by for the signal to stab us in the back. Our guess is that most of them return simply to escape their wretched life across the lines. But their uncontrolled presence is an enormous risk. Besides, it takes a lot of troops and police away from other duties to round them up. Even at that, our security measures are obviously inadequate. We'll have to tighten them up. We also have got to make the Arabs realize that Israel is now a sovereign state and that they can't wander in whenever they feel like it. The official enemy Arab propaganda helps this along by pretending we just don't exist. Why, we get Arabs flying in from Cyprus expecting to walk off the airfield; they're amazed when we stop them; they've no idea what's been happening here. If we don't seal up the frontier, we'll have a hard time as soon as the standard of living of our Arabs starts climbing again. It'll be like in the time of the mandate. Ten per cent of the Arabs in Palestine then weren't Palestinian at all. They simply walked in because life was so much better here."

BEERSHEBA (April)—It seems to be as easy to get out of Israel as into it. On our way down here we forded a desolate *wadi* under a blown-up bridge below Julis. The Simca began steaming from the effort of pulling out of the mud. Captain Applebaum, my escort, drove on amid an absolute stillness, looking for a house and water. There was a lone Arab in a field. "I'll ask him," said Applebaum, and jumped out. "That Arab was terrified," he reported. "Probably an infiltree from Gaza, where the Egyptians are. I've half a mind to arrest him." We tried another road, but it kept bending toward the sea. Finally we turned back to the *wadi,* and this time we bogged down in it. While we were pushing and heaving, a border patrol of six Israeli soldiers stepped from the woods. The road we had been on was no-man's-land, and led directly into Gaza. "If you'd arrested that Arab," they told us, "you'd have violated the armistice. . . ."

Above Beersheba we stopped briefly at Mishmar ha-Negev, an Israeli Army post. A composite of Israel's loyal minorities. The ranking officers are Jewish, with Circassian subalterns, Druse non-coms, and Arab soldiers. Their insignia is a brace of crossed scimitars over a Star of David. Such people fought well as volunteers on the Israeli side, to avenge being pushed around by the Mufti and Kawukji mercenaries, or because they had always gotten on well with the Jews. But they have no use for each other. The Circassians wouldn't even discuss their Druse NCO's, and a Druse sergeant qualified his Arab men for me as "dirty savages."

In the Beersheba Military Governor's antechamber, we encountered a character out of a Hollywood version of *Revolt in the Desert.* A Bedouin chieftain, in town to cadge a few sacks of wheat for his tribe. One of the fifteen thousand nomads who have placed themselves under Israeli authority. Six feet tall, flowing robes and desert head-dress, steel-gray chin-whiskers, a coppery face like the Indian on a penny. He carried two bandoliers filled with bullets across his chest, two pistols in his sash, and a dagger in a silver sheath. A few respectful paces behind him staggered

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his small son, about nine years old, lugging a long carbine.

WE SPENT last night at Revivim, one of the southernmost kibbutzim in the Negev. . . . This morning, a few miles below us as we headed back north, four Israeli soldiers in a military vehicle were ambushed and murdered by Arab raiders.

JERUSALEM (May)—I nearly made it today. I nearly got over officially to the Arab lines. Missed it by just ten yards.

It's been difficult even for non-Jewish writers to cross over from Israel. Ken Bilby, of the New York *Herald Tribune,* did, but he says the Israeli visa in his passport gave him a hard time. Arab officials who saw it became instantly unfriendly or downright menacing. In Tel Aviv a UN official was horrified when I suggested his arranging a safe-conduct for me. "They'd tear you to pieces," he said. The American consulate in Jerusalem declined even to mention it to the Arabs. Bill White, of the *Reader's Digest,* thought we might go over to Amman together and chat with King Abdullah—but he had to drop me from the project after proposing it to our consulate.

Yesterday I asked my friend George Barnes, who represents the UN Conciliation Commission here, at least to try fixing an interview with Abdullah bey el-Tel, Arab Civil Governor in the Old City. There were three of us: Irwin Shaw, of *The Young Lions* and the *New Yorker,* photographer Bob Capa, on assignment for *Holiday,* and myself, of *Fortune.* We're all Americans working for non-Jewish publications—but we're Jewish, which makes a big difference to an Arab. Well, Barnes managed it. Abdullah bey would see us. But not in the Old City. He couldn't take responsibility for our safety. He would meet us in the neutral zone between the two lines.

This morning, just before nine o'clock Arab time (ten o'clock Israeli daylight-saving time), Shaw, Capa, and I walked past the last Jewish sentry post and picked our way around the tank traps, barricades and debris outside Mandelbaum Gate. The "gate" is really a square, every building on its perimeter caved in by shell and grenade, the whole place weeping of desolation. Appropriately, the only half-intact structure has a large notice identifying it as the Evangelistic Bible Mission Society.

Abdullah bey climbed out of a long black car behind a barrier manned by British-trained Arab Legionnaires who were alertly watching our cautious approach. He walked forward to meet us. He wore an ordinary business suit topped by a red fez. He seemed in his early thirties, this personal representative and namesake of the wily old monarch of Hashemite Jordan.

We shook hands all around. He apologized for not permitting us further into Arab territory. He suggested to Capa that the UN photographer probably could give him the pictures of the Old City he needed. As for the rest of us, Abdullah was quite willing to discuss anything we'd like discussed right there, in the no-man's-land between two worlds.

We asked him about the abnormality of a Jerusalem cut in two. He agreed. He implied that internationalization of the entire city would not be "practical," but that if two distinct Arab and Jewish municipalities were legalized, "there ought to be the largest possible circulation between the two sides." He would even like to see the Jews come back in and rebuild their district in the Old City, which had been destroyed during the fighting. "Of course," he added, "we would expect in exchange that our people would be allowed back to their homes on the Jewish side" (mostly undamaged villas owned by wealthy Arabs now in Beirut or Cairo, and occupied by Jewish fugitives from the Old City). Abdullah bey ended by saying that the Jews (at no point did he say—nor has any other Arab I've talked with said—"the Israelis") —the Jews ought also to take back Arab refugees from other parts of evacuated Palestine. "We have twenty thousand homeless Arabs in our Jerusalem zone, and ten thousand local Arabs who are poverty-stricken. Everybody is crowded and unhappy. We hope the Jews will be reasonable about this."

NOW that I've traveled every corner of this country, it has become clear that the Israeli troops must have been decidedly tough even with non-combatant Arabs during the war. There are, for instance, too many dynamited, desolated native villages where little or no fighting ever occurred. The Jews simply came in and smashed the place, often sparing

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only the mosques. I know there are explanations for this havoc: the Israeli Army at first was less an organized military machine than a patchwork of semi-guerrilla units habituated to commando tactics; reprisal destruction of houses and villages is a classic Middle Eastern method of all armies against dissident natives; because the Jewish settlements were generally in the valley and exposed to the Arab settlements, which were generally in the hills, it seemed good strategy to wipe out the Arab advantage whenever the chance came along; and so on. But it is obvious, too, that the Israelis—themselves surprised by the scope and speed of the Arab exodus—did an extra-thorough job of destruction to make sure that the Arabs would have nothing to come back to. There is no evidence that this was official government policy, but it certainly must have been in the minds of many local commanders. It is also plain that, for a long time, nobody was wise enough to foresee that some day Jewish immigrants would fill up whatever empty Arab areas had not been hopelessly wrecked. Looting was not too zealously repressed either. No less an authority than the present Speaker of the Knesset, Joseph Sprintzak, has been quoted as saying that the looting of Arab homes and shops was a major defeat for the new government of Israel.

What about atrocities? Israel knows and laments Dir Yassin, where Irgun massacred more than two hundred Arab men, women, and children. Native fear of more Dir Yassins must be added to all the other reasons for the mad flight of the Arab people—such as their own bad conscience, their leaders' incitements, and British assistance. Were there any other outrages? A UN observer who goes over frequently to the Arab refugee camps assures me darkly that "the Arabs were murderous, yes, but the Jews were no lilies, believe me." This by itself would be unconvincing, especially since the gentleman persistently deplores Israeli behavior in all other matters as well. I am more shaken by the expressions of grief and shame I have privately received from non-political but prominent Israelis whose personal integrity is beyond question. "The Israeli soldier has looted, burned, and slaughtered," I have been told, "and it is no comfort for us that soldiers of every other army do likewise." It is even hinted that certain officers actually ordered their troops to let themselves go. The best evidence that there were atrocities—and, I suppose, the best apology for them, if such things can be apologized for—came to me from a high-ranking veteran of the Jerusalem siege. "Our soldiers," he said, "were no worse than the Americans or British. They were even better. But they had awful provocation. Once sixteen of the boys on patrol were ambushed and killed. We found them lying in a field. Their hearts were cut out. Their eyes were gouged. Their testicles were sewed up in their mouths. Well, that kind of news gets around. When Jews from DP camps and Jews from Morocco talk it over at their mess, they don't react like Harvard graduates. . . ."

Tel Aviv (May)—Not many Israelis torment themselves with the moral and political implications of injustice to the Arabs, but among those who do are some of the finest spirits in the land. They hold to the doctrine of Judah Magnes, that "we should enter the Promised Land, not in the Joshua way, but with peace, sacrifice, and love . . . and a determination to do nothing that cannot be justified before the conscience of the world." The small band of men who cling to this high ideal despite the brutal march of recent history are filled with dread over the consequences of a refusal by Israel to be generous in solution of the Arab question. They feel that no long-range peace is possible, with the Arab world outside or the Arab remnants inside Israel, unless the refugee crisis is resolved with honor and justice.

Such views would be cried down by the great majority of the country and virtually all its leaders. It was not always so. In the beginning nobody could conceive of a new Israel without a large Arab population. Even when they were already in full flight, the eventual return of most of the Arabs was taken for granted. Lionel Feitelberg, one of the top people in the government press office, reflected the general sentiment when he wrote for a South African paper: "We have seen that it is not possible to achieve cooperation with a people living under a feudal system. . . . Our war . . . is not against the simple and deluded Arab peasant. . . . Many Arabs will return. . . . We shall have to try to raise them to a level nearer our own." Lionel doesn't talk or think that way any more. Since then, the immigrant flood has engulfed

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the country, the places of the Arabs have been occupied, their departure has been transmuted by time from a curious phenomenon into a miracle of good luck. Spurred by the perpetual fear of external Arab attack, the idea of "good riddance" of internal Arabs has taken hold.

For my Foreign Ministry friends, the Arab innocent who was misled by his cowardly leaders has ceased to exist or, rather, has become a villain who turned his hand against the Jews and must take the consequences. As for the Arab states, the view here is that their invasion created the Arab problem and now let *them* solve it. A sign of rapid "maturity" at Ha-Kirya is the tendency to borrow the cynicism of older governments. "Minorities are a throwback, a political retrogression," a close associate of Foreign Minister Sharett advises me. "The modern trend is to transfer minorities, not re-establish them, particularly when a minority has decamped of its own accord." Someone has reminded me that the "Christian" states can hardly expect Israel to improve on their own precedents: the forced deportation of German-Hungarian minorities from Czechoslovakia, wartime Britain's shipment of enemy aliens to Canada, and even America's concentration of her Japanese in Colorado and Arizona. . . .

If I could see some actual *physical* possibility of reintegrating a large number of refugees, I might be able to work up more practical enthusiasm for the Arab case. However, even lacking that, I see sufficient cause for alarm in the likelihood that Tel Aviv's present attitude, bordering on cockiness, will hurt the *Israeli* case. There is a certain willingness here to take back some refugees who are close relatives of those who stayed behind, and to make some compensation for abandoned land. Otherwise, the Israeli position consists only of offers of plans and arguments for settling the refugees everywhere except in Israel—at international expense. There is some discussion of the idea of "exchanging" Arabs for Jewish minorities in Arab countries like Iraq and Syria (though Tel Aviv's right to dispose of such Jewish minorities might be debatable). And Israel is bent on categoric refusal to negotiate any settlement at all until the Arab states agree to peace terms. This can end only by giving Israel a bad world press. There is considerable sympathy abroad for the urgent plight of homeless Arabs in refugee camps. Against this appeal on humanitarian grounds, the firmness of Tel Aviv, right or wrong, is going to sound harsh. It will not make friends for Israel.

As far as the Israeli Arabs are concerned—at least the ones who are here "legitimately"—it looks as if they will get an even break.

Right now they have plenty to grouse about. It may be a peculiar word to use, but "ghetto" is the one I think of for the guarded enclosure where Arabs are concentrated in Jaffa and other once-important Arab towns. The restraints on travel put a competitive handicap on Arab workers in finding jobs and on Arab businessmen in drumming up trade. Many Arabs complain, too, that they are barred from tending their farms any distance from their places of enforced residence, that their lands are spoiling in neglect, and that they are being taxed for property from which they derive no benefit.

But such inequities can be blamed on the wartime emergency and there is no reason to think they won't be lifted bit by bit as the need for military security decreases. One mistake that had nothing to do with security was the abolition of the Ministry of Minorities, which did good work in the early months as a clearing house for Arab problems in all categories. It seems the Ministry's liquidation was partly due to its having been packed with Mapamniks, the brethren of the extreme Left, who used their jobs to build the party's Arab political fences. Anyway, Arab affairs now are scattered among a dozen bureaus, to everybody's confusion. Sooner or later the government will need to set up some kind of agency or ministry again to coordinate the Arab policies of all departments.

Meanwhile, Israel has already done much to fulfill the pledge that the Arabs will be made equal citizens. Arabs participated freely in the elections—even Arab women, for the first time in their history. Three Arabs sit in the Israeli parliament. An Arab translator in a glass booth, just as at Lake Success, renders all Hebrew speeches into Arabic and vice-versa, with headphones available for the deputies. Arabs have large representation in their local councils, townships, and public services, and entire freedom of religious worship. Many Arab schools have been reopened, and new ones set up where none previously

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existed, at Jewish expense; coeducation has been introduced to lift the Arab woman out of her traditionally degraded status; progressive educational reforms are being tactfully begun, as one Jewish Oriental scholar puts it, "to remove the cataracts from Arabia's once beautiful eyes." Arab school-children are getting free lunches, expectant Arab mothers free care. The Arabs are probably receiving more state medical attention than they ever had from the British. Their rations are equal in quantity and quality to Jewish rations. They are drawing the full benefits of the Workers' Sick Fund at cut rates. Arab wages are double and sometimes almost triple the pre-Israeli minimums. The Labor Ministry has been rebuilding some factories to make work for the Arabs. Producer cooperatives have started with Histadrut loans, and consumer cooperatives have sprung up in nearly every Arab village.

However, there continues to be serious Arab unemployment. Arab merchants who survived the exodus are famished for customers. Resentment among the Arabs is deep against the "requisitioning" of property belonging not merely to Arabs who left the country but to Arab "DPs" who fled from one place to another *inside* Israel, and even to Arabs who did not budge. The dilemma of equal pay for equal work is still far from solution, especially since some important sectors of the old Palestinian economy depended greatly on cheap native labor.

One of the most serious difficulties is the crisis of Arab leadership. The imams fled from the mosques, the kadis from the courts, the doctors, the teachers, practically all the intellectuals. Only workers and peasants remained. The fabric of Arab society will have to be remade from shreds and patches. When the staff of the government-sponsored newspaper *al-Yom* ("The Day") was being organized, a competent Arab editor was nowhere to be found in Israel—except among the Communist Arabs. There were candidates enough, but none was qualified. An Arabic-speaking Jew had to take the job. The paper's circulation has been feeble. The cultural level of the existing Arab community, separated from its middle class and intelligentsia, is abysmally low. Many of the Arabs can't read, and many of those who do simply aren't interested. Besides raising the Arabs out of this lethargy, the government will have to protect them against the hostility of certain Jewish elements, particularly those veterans who return to a housing shortage after military service against the Arabs, and those immigrants who exchange a European DP camp for an Israeli transit camp. More than once, police have had to eject ex-soldiers who established themselves in flats and houses after dispossessing their Arab occupants by force.

Can the Arabs ever really be "assimilated" into the Israeli pattern? Government specialists say yes—given enough time and tranquillity. Even now, there are hopeful signs. A group of Arabs is planning to start a kibbutz of its own. Many Arab workers are affiliating with Israeli cooperatives, and some of them are active in organizational and welfare work among their own people, who previously received little from their leaders beyond inflammatory speeches. S., one of the Foreign Ministry's top orientalists, is quite confident: "It may take five years or fifty, but the underprivilege of the Arabs will inevitably disappear. Legally there will soon be no discrimination at all. Practically it will take time, because the Arabs start so far behind. But they will have our standard of living some day, they will wear our clothes, they will speak our language. Assimilation will be automatic. Palestine's Arabs have always adopted the language and customs of their conquerors. As a matter of fact, racially they aren't Arabs at all, just Arabic-speaking. They have been here four millennia. In their time they were Canaanites, Romans, Greeks, Turks. I think one can even play with the idea that many of them, at least those in the hills, are actually descended from the ancient Jews. You know, about seventy per cent of the older Arab villages have names that don't mean anything in Arabic. They seem to have come down from Hebrew via Aramaic. For instance, there are seven places called 'Jaba,' which is nothing in Arabic but has its Aramaic or Hebrew equivalent in Giva, meaning 'hill.' They have six villages named 'Tira'—the exact Hebrew word for 'enclosure.' . . ."

New York: Postscript (November)—The Lausanne "peace" conference has convened and adjourned without visible achievement, and once again a UN mission has gone forth, sending back recommendations on Arab

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refugees. Inside Israel more and more restrictions against Arabs are being lifted, some Arab orphans and other children swept up in the mass flight are being returned to Israel, certain Palestinian Arab PWs are being released and allowed to go back to their homes in Israeli territory, Tel Aviv has become willing to discuss the re-entry of one hundred thousand Arab refugees *if* peace is established. The Vatican, pressing its case on Jerusalem in the face of strong Israeli opposition, has seen fit to protest about Israeli mistreatment of Arabs—though no thunder has come from Rome concerning the Jews of Iraq. In the months since I sailed from Haifa for the Turkish port of Izmir last May, the number of Jewish immigrants marooned in Israeli "reception" centers has nearly doubled.

Here at home I have found much graver concern than in Israel with the *moral* side of the Arab problem. This is quite natural, if only because American Jews are more remote from the physical pressure of Israel's economic and military difficulties, and more sensitive to world opinion. Which does not, of course, in any sense weaken their right to be concerned with the moral aspect, or diminish whatever truth exists in their argument. They see the stern Israeli attitude toward refugees as a potential menace to liberal principles, to world Jewry as a spokesman for those principles, and to Israel herself as an isolated community in a hostile Arab world. They have fought for European restitution of property to Jews returning from Hitler's camps, for the right of minorities to be considered as loyal citizens instead of latent fifth-columnists, and against the transfer of populations by governmental fiat. The principles on which these good fights have relied may be vitiated, they fear, by Tel Aviv's contrary leanings in the matter of the Arabs.

For myself, frankly, I simply do not know how much virtue one can urge on a new state struggling for survival. Would a generous policy toward refugees conciliate the Arab states? They have never been conciliated by any previous Jewish generosity. Should Israel be expected to do better than other countries? Certainly Israel's treatment of her Arabs seems saintly by contrast with Iraq's treatment of her Jews. But, conversely, can a *Jewish* state content itself with emerging favorably from odious comparisons with Iraq or even with Europe? Must not a Jewish state live by far higher ethical standards, as its devotees and friends always said it must and would? Or is all this hopelessly and romantically ideal in a world of harsh political realities?

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THE ARTIST AS WITNESS OF FREEDOM

The Independent Mind in an Age of Ideologies

ALBERT CAMUS

WE ARE living in a time when men, impelled by mediocre and ferocious ideologies, have got into the habit of being ashamed of everything —ashamed of themselves, of being happy, of loving or creating. It is a time when Racine would have blushed for *Bérénice,* and Rembrandt, to beg pardon for having painted "The Night Watch," would have rushed off to register at the nearest party local. Writers and artists today have a sick conscience; it is fashionable among us to apologize for our profession. And, to tell the truth, people are zealous in encouraging us in this. From all corners of our political society a great cry is addressed to us, demanding that we justify ourselves.

We have to justify both our being useless and, at the same time, serving by our very uselessness ugly causes. When we reply that it is rather difficult to wash oneself clean of such contradictory accusations, we are told that it is not possible to justify oneself in the eyes of everyone, but that we can obtain the generous pardon of a few by taking their side, which, if one were to believe them, is the only true one. If this kind of argument seems to misfire, the artist is then told: "Look at the misery the world is in. What are you doing about it?" To this cynical blackmail the artist might reply: "The misery of the world? I'm not adding anything to it. Which of you can say as much?" But it remains true that none of us, if he is conscientious, can remain indifferent to the appeal that rises up from a desperate mankind. We must therefore feel guilty, in spite of everything. So we are dragged into the lay confessional, which is the worst confessional of all.

But it is not so simple as that. The choice we are asked to make is not self-evident; it is determined by other and earlier choices. And the first choice an artist makes is precisely that of being an artist; if he has chosen to be an artist, it is because of what he himself is and because of a certain idea that he has formed of what art is. And if these seemed to him good enough reasons to justify his original choice, the chances are that they will continue to be good enough to define his position with respect to history. Since one must justify oneself, I should like to state why there is a justification in practicing, within the limits of one's strength and talent, a profession which, in the midst of a world withered by hate, enables every one of us to say in all peace of mind that he is no man's mortal enemy. But this requires saying something about the world in which we are living and about what it is incumbent upon us to do there.

THE world about us is in a bad way and we are asked to do something to change it. But what is this bad way? At first sight, it can be defined simply: there has been a great deal of killing in the world in recent years and there are some who foresee more

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IN ALL the organized efforts to combat totalitarianism, it is often overlooked that the most uncompromising fighter against the regimentation of the human spirit by the giant state may well be the unorganized individual who simply insists upon speaking his mind; and ALBERT CAMUS here asserts that it is the creative artist and thinker who is this individual *par excellence*. Mr. Camus is one of the most talented of postwar France's young essayists and writers. Two of his novels, *The Stranger* and *The Plague,* have been published in this country and have been warmly received. This essay was originally an address delivered at the International Meeting of Intellectuals in Paris last November. It was translated from the French by Bernard Frechtman.

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killing. There are so many dead that the atmosphere has finally grown oppressive. Of course this is nothing new. Official history has always been the story of great murderers, and it is not today that Cain is killing Abel. But it is only today that Cain is killing Abel in the name of logic and then claiming the ribbon of the Legion of Honor.

During the big strikes in November 1947, the newspapers announced that the Paris executioner, M. Desfourneau, was also going to stop working. To my mind, not enough attention was paid to this decision of my fellow-countryman. His demands were clear. He naturally asked for a bonus for each execution, which is customary in any enterprise. But, more important, he vigorously demanded that he be given the status of chief clerk. He wanted to receive from the state, which he felt he had well served, the only consecration, the only tangible honor, which a modern nation can offer its faithful servants: an administrative status. Thus came to an end, beneath the weight of history, one of the last of our liberal professions.

In barbaric times a terrible halo kept the hangman outside the pale. He was the man who, by profession, laid violent hands upon the mystery of life and the flesh. He was, and knew he was, an object of horror. And this horror consecrated at the same time the value of human life. Today he is merely an object of shame. Under these conditions, he is undoubtedly right in no longer wanting to be the poor relation whom one keeps in the kitchen because his nails are dirty. In a civilization where murder and violence are already doctrines and are on the way to becoming institutions, the hangman has every right to enter the administrative ranks. The fact is that we French are a little behind the times. Almost everywhere in the world, executioners have already been installed in ministerial chairs. They have merely substituted the rubber stamp for the axe.

When death becomes a matter of statistics and administration, it means that world affairs are not going right. But if death becomes abstract, it means that life is abstract too. The life of each person cannot be other than abstract as soon as one starts making it conform to an ideology. The unfortunate thing is that we are in the age of ideologies and of ideologies which are totalitarian—that is, which are sufficiently sure of themselves, of their imbecilic reason or of their short-lived truth, to see the world's salvation in their own domination.

THERE is no life without dialogue. And in the major part of the world, dialogue has been replaced today by polemics. The 20th century is the century of polemics and abuse. These occupy among nations and individuals, and on the very plane of disciplines which were formerly disinterested, the place traditionally occupied by the reflective dialogue. Day and night, thousands of voices, each carrying on its own tumultuous monologue, pour out on the peoples of the world a torrent of mystifying words, attacks, defenses, and over-excitement. But what is the mechanism of polemics? It consists in considering the opponent as an enemy, consequently in simplifying him and refusing to see him. We have no idea of what the man we are insulting looks like, or whether he ever smiles, or how. Having become three-quarters blind by the grace of polemics, we no longer live among men but in a world of silhouettes.

There is no life without persuasion. And today's history knows only intimidation. Men live and can only live on the basis of the idea that they have something in common on which they can always get together. But we have discovered the following: there are men whom one does not persuade. It was and is impossible for victims in concentration camps to explain to those degrading them that they ought not do so—these latter no longer represent men but an idea raised to the temperature of the most inflexible of wills. The man who wants to dominate is deaf. When confronted by him, the only thing to do is fight or die. That is why men of today live in a state of terror. In *The Book of the Dead* we read that, in order to

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merit forgiveness, the just Egyptian had to be able to say, "I have caused no one fear." Under these conditions, we shall in vain seek our great contemporaries in the ranks of the blessed on Judgment Day.

No wonder that these silhouettes, henceforth blind and deaf, terrorized, fed by ration tickets, their entire lives summed up in a police questionnaire, can then be treated as anonymous abstractions. It is interesting to note that the regimes which are born of these ideologies are the very ones which, as a matter of system, proceed to uproot populations, moving them about over the surface of Europe like bloodless symbols which take on a paltry life only in statistical columns. Since the entrance of these fine philosophies into history, tremendous masses of men, each of whom once had his own way of shaking hands, have been buried once and for all beneath the two initials—"D.P."—which a very logical world has invented for them.

YES, all that is logical. When one wants to unify the whole world in the name of an ideology, there is no other way but to make this world as fleshless, as blind, and as deaf as the ideology itself. There is no other way but to cut the roots which bind man to life and nature. It is no accident if one does not find landscapes in the great European literature since Dostoevsky. It is no accident if the significant books of today, instead of being interested in the nuances of the heart and the verities of love, get excited only about judges, trials, and the mechanics of accusation, if instead of opening windows on the beauty of the world, one carefully closes them on the anguish of the solitary. It is not an accident that the philosopher who today inspires all European thought is the one who wrote that only the modern city allows the mind to become conscious of itself, and who went so far as to say that nature is abstract and only reason is concrete. This, in brief, is the viewpoint of Hegel, and it is the point of departure of a tremendous adventure of the intelligence, which ends by killing everything. In the great spectacle of nature these drunken spirits see nothing but themselves. This is the ultimate blindness.

Why go further? Those who know the ruined cities of Europe know what I am talking about. They offer up the image of that fleshless world, lean with pride, where ghosts go wandering through a monotonous apocalypse in search of a lost friendship with nature and human beings. The great tragedy of Western man is that the forces of nature or those of friendship no longer intervene between him and his historical development. His roots cut, his arms withered, he begins to merge with the gallows that is promised him.

But at least, having reached this height of unreason, there is nothing to prevent us from exposing the gullibility of this century, which makes a show of running after the empire of reason, whereas in fact it merely seeks abstract reasons for loving in order to replace the love it has lost. Our writers, who all end up appealing to that wretched, loveless substitute called ethics, are well aware of this. The men of today may be able to master everything within them, and that is their greatness. But there is at least one thing that most of them will never again be able to find, the strength to love which has been taken from them. That is really why they are ashamed. And it is only right for artists to share this shame since they have contributed to it. But let them be able to say that they are ashamed of themselves and not of their profession. For everything that makes for the dignity of art is opposed to such a world and challenges it.

THE work of art, by the mere fact that it exists, denies the conquests of ideology. One of the directions of the history of tomorrow is the struggle, which has already begun, between conquerors and artists. Yet both once had the same end in view. Political action and artistic creation are the two faces of the same revolt against the world's disorder, the same desire to give the world unity. For a long time the cause of the artist merged with that of the political in-

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novator: Bonaparte's ambition was the same as Goethe's, though Bonaparte left us the drum in the lycées and Goethe the *Roman Elegies*. But with the intervention of ideologies of efficiency based on technology, the revolutionary by a subtle transformation has become a conqueror, and the two currents of thought have diverged. What the conqueror of the Right or Left seeks is not unity—which is above all the harmony of opposites—but totality, which is the stamping out of differences.

The artist distinguishes where the conqueror levels. The artist who lives and creates on the level of flesh and passion knows that nothing is simple and that the other person exists. The world of the artist is one of live debate and understanding. The conqueror wants the other not to exist; his world is a world of masters and slaves, the very one in which we are living. I do not know of a single great work built on hatred alone, whereas we are all familiar with the empires of hatred. In a time when the conqueror, by the very logic of his attitude, becomes an executioner and policeman, the artist is forced to be refractory. Faced with contemporary political society, the artist's only coherent attitude—otherwise he must renounce art—is refusal without concession. He cannot, even should he want to, be the accomplice of those who use the language or the means of contemporary ideologies.

That is why it is useless and ridiculous to ask the artist for justification and *engagement*, involvement. By his very function, the artist is the witness of freedom, and this is a justification for which he sometimes pays dearly. By his function he is engaged in the density of history, where man's very flesh stifles. The world being what it is, he is involved in it whether he likes it or not, and he is by nature the enemy of the abstract idols which are triumphant today, be they national or partisan. And he is their enemy not in the name of morality or virtue, as some try to suggest—by a further gullibility. It is in the name of man's passion for what is unique in man that the artist must always abhor undertakings which cloak themselves in what is most impoverished in reason.

But this defines at the same time the solidarity of all artists. It is because we have to defend the solitude of each that we shall never again be solitary. We are in a hurry, we cannot work all alone. Tolstoy was able to write the greatest novel in all literature about a war in which he did not participate. Our wars do not leave us time to write about anything other than ourselves and, at the very same moment, they kill Péguy and thousands of young poets. Beyond frontiers, the artists are working together, sometimes without realizing it, on the thousand faces of a single work which will rise up and confront the totalitarian creation. Yes, all together, and with them those thousands of men who are trying to erect the silent forms of their creations in the tumult of cities. And along with them, even those who think that they can work for totalitarian ideology by means of their art, whereas, at the very heart of their work, the power of art shatters the propaganda, insists upon the unity of which they are the true servants, and singles them out for our forced fraternity and, at the same time, for the mistrust of those who are making use of them temporarily.

True artists do not make good political disciples, for they are incapable of taking their opponent's death lightly. They are on the side of life, not of death. They are the witnesses of the flesh, not the law. They are condemned by their vocation to understand the very one who is their enemy. That does not mean that they are incapable of judging good and evil. On the contrary. But their aptitude for living the lives of others enables them to recognize, even among the most criminal, the constant justification of men, namely, suffering. That is what will always keep us from pronouncing absolute judgment and, consequently, from endorsing absolute punishment. In the world of condemnation to death which is ours, artists bear witness to that in man which refuses to die. No one's enemy, unless it be the hangman's!

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And that is what will always single them out, eternal Girondins, for the threats and blows of our Montagnards in celluloid cuffs. But, after all, this awkward position, by its very inconvenience, makes for their grandeur.

A day will come when everyone will recognize it, and, respectful of their differences, artists will then stop lacerating themselves as they do. They will recognize that their deepest vocation is to defend to the very end their opponent's right not to be of their opinion. They will proclaim, each in his own way, that it is better to be wrong without murdering anyone than to be right in the silence of the charnel-house. They will try to demonstrate that though revolutions may succeed by violence, they can be maintained only by dialogue. And they will then know that this singular vocation creates for them the most overwhelming of brotherhoods, which, through all the ages of the intelligence, has never stopped struggling to affirm against the abstractions of history that which exceeds history, and that is the flesh, be it suffering or be it happy. All of present-day Europe, puffed up in its pride, cries out to them that this undertaking is ridiculous and vain. But all of us are in the world to demonstrate the contrary.

THE RABBI

RALPH GORDON

THROUGH the door, worshipful, we watch him, Mother
Holding our shoulder-blades, one by one, and thrusting
Our noses in for a look. "No different from other

Men," we think to ourselves – There, he's adjusting
His great fur cap; Mother's hand grips my shoulder,
As if to say, Watch! "He takes it off when he's resting,"

She whispers, "and maybe he'll take it off now." Grown bolder,
My brother peers in beside us; we both look hard.
"He's holier than Grand-dad," Mother says, "and much older;

He lives in Palestine mostly, and his beard
Has never been cut at all." At last the great cap
Lifts, showing a skull-cap beneath. "Never off his guard,

You see," says Mother, and with a decisive tap
She leads us off: "He's going to take his nap."

RALPH GORDON's poem "Summoning God" appeared in the October 1949 COMMENTARY. Mr. Gordon, who was born in Odessa in 1898, has contributed poetry to the *Atlantic Monthly* and *American Poet*, and is in addition the author of two volumes on the technique of poetry. He is at present teaching in the English department of the City College of New York.

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SLOW REVOLUTION IN RICHMOND, VA.

A New Pattern in the Making

DAVID AND ADELE BERNSTEIN

SOCIAL change is seeping through Richmond, Virginia, as quietly and pervasively as the aroma of tobacco from the mills down near the James River. Old-established patterns are reshaping themselves in a kind of middle-class revolution—an altogether respectable revolution, however, with an "r" so faint as to be almost indiscernible. The war brought new industries, new labor markets, new wealth, as well as new human experiences and values to the whole South. Du Pont has put up a huge new cellophane plant just outside Richmond, and there is an unlovely but lucrative factory district spreading along the farther reaches of Broad Street. The riverfront mills turn out more than sixty billion cigarettes a year, one in every six smoked in America. Since people smoke most when they worry most, this is one of the few American cities stable enough to ride out a possible depression.

Altogether, Richmond's standard of living is higher now than ever before. The Bureau of Labor Statistics recently chose three cities, Richmond, Washington, and Manchester (New Hampshire), for a study of annual savings by middle-income families: Richmond's average was $260, Washington's $36, and Manchester had an average deficit of $148.

A breeze of liberalism has poked into the musty corners of local politics. Last year, for the first time in Richmond's history, a Negro, Oliver Hill, was elected to the City Council; it took more white than Negro votes to put him there. For the past two years, Negroes have been on the municipal police force. In the gubernatorial primaries last summer, a mildly liberal politician named Francis Pickens Miller lost to the candidate of the ancient Byrd machine; but the protest vote was larger than ever.

The city has changed. Its drabness is not less drab, nor its little eddies of antiquarian loveliness less lovely. But the business district bustles as never before. On the streets people look, if not fashionably, at least solidly well dressed. Department stores now emphasize "gracious living"—a term taken very seriously here—for everyone. The old families, with their fixed, inherited wealth, still dominate local affairs, but without the old assurance. Society leadership still is theirs, but not in the way it used to be before the war, when they also controlled the city's politics, dominated the civic and welfare activities, and set the social tone. Today the recently rich nudge them with social aspirations of their own; and a newly emerging Richmond of Negroes who vote, of factory workers who join unions, and of a secure white-collar group, is seeking a voice in its own affairs.

NOWHERE—except perhaps among the Negro third of Richmond—are all these signs of change so marked as among the Jews in the city, who number something less than eight thousand in a population of nearly a

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ALMOST every Jew has an opinion about what the future holds for Jewish life in America—and usually a program to go along with it. Indeed, the number of opinions and programs is in inverse proportion to the facts available; we really know very little, concretely, about the changing patterns of Jewish life in the various cities and regions of this country. Here, DAVID and ADELE BERNSTEIN offer their report on what seems to them to have happened to the Jews of Richmond, Virginia—by no means a typical community, even for the South, but also by no means unique. Mr. Bernstein has published a book, *The Philippine Story,* and many magazine articles; Mrs. Bernstein has worked as a newspaperwoman in Washington. Their article "Washington: Tarnished Symbol" appeared in the November 1948 COMMENTARY.

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quarter of a million. For nearly two centuries their history has woven itself into the Richmond story; their roots are deep, and all the myths and shibboleths of this stronghold of Southern romanticism are theirs. There were Jewish slave-holders, and Jewish warriors in the Confederate cause, and Jews who suffered during the Reconstruction years. These were the old Jewish families, and it was quite natural that they should have dominated the Jewish community—as old families dominated the entire community—until the new Southern revolution began.

For fifty years past, Jewish newcomers have been absorbed by Richmond, not in the sense that they were accepted by the old families with open arms, but in the sense that they themselves willingly accepted a subordinate, if not submerged, status in the structure of the community. In Virginia, where only two per cent of the population is foreign-born, all newcomers are strangers for a very long time. And the inexorable, though slow, tempo of integration might have continued undisturbed along the lanes rutted by time, had it not been for a double impact —first, of the explosive changes in the South itself, and second, of the even more explosive effect on the Richmond Jews of events in the outside world.

The Jewish tragedy in Europe, the arrival of refugees, the resurgence of Jewish consciousness, the widespread Zionist agitation, reached Richmond later than most other American cities. Roving speakers, fund-raising campaigns, and the local headlines created a new Jewish-consciousness here as in the rest of the country. In Richmond, however, there had been no preparation. The visiting speakers found audiences apathetic; the appeals for funds were only meagerly met; and the headlines were being offset by accounts of the numerous activities of Dr. Edward N. Calisch, for half a century the leading Jewish citizen and rabbi of the most fashionable congregation in the city.

Because this is an atmosphere where change is greeted grudgingly, and only when there is no well-mannered way of resisting it, even the emotional impact of events abroad was slow to stir the Richmond Jews. In the end, however, it was to change their whole communal way of life.

THE weight of the past hangs heavy over Richmond—the memory of the great, gay days before the War Between the States, when Poe walked its streets, his head full of morbid ratiocination; when its society counted among the most elegant in the country, and Thackeray, visiting on a lecture tour in the 1850's, called it "the merriest and most picturesque place in America." And the memory, of course, of the desperately romantic days of the Confederacy, when Richmond was the political headquarters of the violent struggle which pitted states' rights, plantations, and slavery against the irresistible industrial revolution.

The past is real here, and until a few years ago it almost overshadowed the present. The WPA guide to Virginia solemnly relates: "The city's social season, from late fall to Ash Wednesday, retains its old ritual, with the Monday germans as highlights. Tea in darkened drawing rooms, dinners served by tradition-trained butlers, frosted mint juleps in ancient goblets, and Smithfield hams and beaten biscuits, are part of the ceremonial that has continued with no deviation. It is still proper in old Richmond to refer to a guest as So-and-So's granddaughter, or the descendant of a founding father."

At least one Jewish family in ten can trace its local ancestry back to the 1850's or earlier. In Richmond, this is synonymous with aristocracy. Until recently the bridge between them and the other nine-tenths was narrow and rarely crossed. In a community where "visiting" is the principal recreation, the two groups exchanged little hospitality; nor, certainly, did they belong to the same societies or share in social diversions. The scions of the old families inherited the first positions in the Jewish community along with their names and wealth—positions which involved communal as well as social leadership. They retained exclusive possession of their synagogue, Beth Ahabah, and of their rabbi, Dr. Calisch.

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It is not altogether possible to understand what has happened to the Jews of Richmond without knowing something about Rabbi Calisch, who came to Richmond in 1891, at twenty-six, from a briefly held Reform pulpit in Peoria, Illinois, and spent his life creating an image of the assimilated Richmond Jew.

He was handsome and robust, something of a scholar, an eloquent speaker, and a sophisticated but enthusiastic participant in civic affairs. He exchanged pulpits with Protestant clergymen; he delivered patriotic speeches during both World Wars; he lunched with President Taft at the White House and with Lord Reading at the viceregal palace in India; he was treasurer of the English Speaking Union, president of the Richmond Peace Council, and president of the Richmond alumni chapter of Phi Beta Kappa; in 1939 the Richmond *Times-Dispatch* put his name on its Roll of Honor as one of the ten outstanding men of Virginia.

He was equally active in Jewish affairs: he was on the executive committee of the local B'nai B'rith lodge; he lectured for the Jewish Chautauqua; he was president of the Central Conference of American Rabbis. In his maiden sermon at Beth Ahabah, Rabbi Calisch had said: "I shall endeavor to expound a religion that shall not flinch before the light of science nor cower beneath the flash of research, yet shall be loyal to the core to the grand old mother, Judaism." He instituted the practice of uncovered heads at worship; and on the rare occasions when he visited an Orthodox synagogue, he refused to don a skull cap. He modernized the Beth Ahabah ritual in accord with his Reform philosophy, revised the prayer book, and wrote a *Child's Bible*. He introduced progressive education techniques in his Children's Religious School, with arts and crafts classes, a dramatics class, a stamp club, and a photography club. Thirty years ago, at the height of the rabbi's prestige, the president of his congregation made some notes on "old-time observances" that were now "hardly known by any of the present generation." The list was long: "Wearing the *tallis;* separation of the sexes in the synagogue; fasting on Tisha-b'Av as well as on Yom Kippur; a strictly kept *shabbes;* unleavened meals on Passover; laying *tefillim;* a Kosher household; Sabbath blessing on Friday evening."

In his relations with Christian neighbors, the rabbi created in himself the most ingratiating of Jewish stereotypes—the man completely unaware of any personal problem as a Jew, at ease and unselfconscious, articulate but not argumentative, intelligent but not arrogant, worldly but not cynical. In 1907 he addressed a joint session of the House of Bishops and House of Clerical and Lay Deputies of the General Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church, and the next day a Richmond paper exclaimed editorially: "His lofty, dignified, and graceful address was in every way worthy of the man, of the great race he represented, and the illustrious conclave that listened with respect to his words. For ourselves, we know not which most to admire, the spirit that moved the House to invite the address, or the manner in which that address was delivered. Both were admirable."

THE accolades continued, in the press and pulpits and at civic gatherings, whenever he made a public appearance through the years that followed. Yet, shortly before his death, Calisch appears to have had some doubts about his career. "One thing in which I have failed was in developing a following among Jews such as I have among Christians," he told a friend.

"By the late 1930's and until his retirement," a Beth Ahabah member recalls, "Rabbi Calisch would deliver his sermons on Saturday mornings—on the philosophy of Spinoza, or the ethics of Judaism, or some other subject like that—and there would be scarcely a dozen of us in that big, dim synagogue. I hardly know why—unless it was that somehow I don't think Calisch was loved by the Jews here, or even greatly respected, during the last years of his life. It was a tragedy, in a way, and many of us wondered whether he was such a great success after all."

Calisch was, on occasion, invited to visit

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the darkened drawing rooms of the First Families of Virginia. He was asked to address the annual breakfast of the Hunt Club. Through him, and through its respect for him, all of Richmond that "counted" showed how much it thought of the Richmond Jews. But neither Rabbi Calisch nor any other Jew was invited to join the Hunt Club. Indeed, social exclusion—the only tangible kind of anti-Semitism in the city, aside from a few recent cases of restrictive covenants—seems, if anything, to have increased during his half-century there. A hundred and fifty years ago, when as much as one-sixth of Richmond's white population was Jewish, there was a good deal more social intercourse (with its inevitable result, intermarriage) and more active participation in municipal affairs than in recent times. When the most fashionable city club, the Westmoreland, was organized in the 1870's, its membership included several Jews, and once it elected a Jewish president. Today the club excludes Jews, as do the Commonwealth Club, the Country Club of Virginia, the Hermitage Country Club, the Junior League, and the most fashionable women's groups.

"The philosophy of the old Jewish families," a Richmonder explained, "was that they ought to be as quiet and unostentatious as possible. They would not dream of making a fuss about the fact that they received no invitation to join a club or to attend a party, no matter how much they would have wanted to go. If they were invited to join an important civic or welfare committee of some kind, they accepted graciously and worked hard. But they did not think it proper to volunteer their services. They hardly ever ran for public office, for example, and frowned on other Jews who did. They just didn't think a Jew should put himself forward."

In any event, the well-born Jews did receive the outward forms of acceptance. But they would have been less than human if they did not, however unostentatiously, yearn for full social acceptance in the very circles which treated them civilly but distantly—and if they did not, in turn, practice a polite but firm form of exclusion on Jews whose ancestry was not so deeply rooted in the Old Dominion.

THE structure of the Jewish community lent itself easily to such stratification. The synagogues were—and still are—the very core of Richmond Jewish life. Beth Ahabah is the oldest; it was established in the early 1840's by German Jewish immigrants who were either excluded from or uncomfortable in the Sephardic synagogue they found on their arrival. In time, the energetic new group absorbed the diminishing Sephardic families, and with them assumed unchallenged communal leadership.

Meanwhile, Polish Jews trickled into Richmond in the 1850's, followed thirty years later by Russian Jews in larger numbers. The Poles, who had founded an Orthodox synagogue of their own, were a little snobbish toward the newer wave, and a second Orthodox synagogue came into being.

To the Beth Ahabah aristocrats, there seemed to be little difference between these two foreign-accented groups; and a basic, rigid, and none too friendly pattern of nobleman and commoner lasted well into the 20th century. By the 1930's, however, some of the Polish Jewish families had reached the point where even Beth Ahabah was prepared to accept them; while the children and grandchildren of the wave of the 1880's were ready to strike out on their own.

These groups—English-speaking, native-born, increasingly prosperous, uncomfortable with both Orthodoxy and Reform Judaism—created a new Conservative temple, Congregation Beth-El. This turned out to be the first real challenge to Beth Ahabah, or, more accurately, to the Calisch mentality.

The timing is significant. Beth-El began as the depression years were ending. Its members were the second generation of Eastern European Jews, businessmen and professionals who were beginning to feel a sense of communal responsibility—in a community which did not encourage them to assume responsibility. They enjoyed increasing economic security, but a decreasing Jewish security, principally because of the news

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from Europe. Unable to escape into identification with Richmond's past, they made a virtue of the necessity to be Jewish.

It was not long before they became the stronghold of Zionist feeling and activity in the community, with a large, resourceful membership that included an unprecedented number of young people. Unwittingly, perhaps, they had provided Richmond's Jews with a station midway between Beth Ahabah and Orthodoxy. In doing so, they remade the social map of the community and provided the impulses which have changed Beth Ahabah itself.

To the Beth-El group, Beth Ahabah was not quite Jewish. It was "assimilationist," in the unpleasant meaning of the word; it was cowardly; it was frightened; it was anti-Zionist. And as the Beth-El middle class increased in economic strength, as well as in numbers, their sentiments could no longer be laughed off. Beth-El and what it symbolized thus brought to Richmond the fermentation process that had taken place, many years earlier, in most other Jewish communities throughout the country.

IF RICHMOND had lagged behind the rest of the country, there were valid reasons.

First of these was the unusual size, wealth, and deep-rootedness of the old families. Indeed, it is hard to think of any American city, other than San Francisco, where so many Jewish families are so intimately identified with the earliest local history; and the evolution of the Jewish community in San Francisco is not unlike that of Richmond.

Secondly, the economic tempo in Richmond has been slower than in Northern cities. Tobacco kept Richmond fairly well off in hard times, but until recent years there were few opportunities for new enterprises to develop on an ambitious scale. In New York, Eastern European Jews were beginning to make fortunes forty years ago, and even to engulf the older families. In Richmond there are only a few such early success stories. On the other hand, this is a Jewish community without a working class, and without serious poverty (which means that there is little incentive toward a proletarian rebelliousness). The local Jewish welfare agency carries a maximum yearly case load of twenty, several of which are transients. A few years ago, the Orthodox congregation did boast of one impoverished member, an unemployable painter who worshiped regularly without paying membership dues. During the war, when prosperous congregants clamored for tickets for the High Holidays, the painter was asked to give up his regular seat and move down a few rows so that a large family could sit together. "I am the only poor Jew in Richmond," he protested. "I deserve more respect."

The third reason for the time-lag was Richmond itself. Nearly all its people, Christian and Jewish, tend to resist change; and the newest arrivals learn very quickly how pleasant it can be to put on the brakes.

With the war, however, the South as a whole began to emerge from its colonial economic status, and new opportunities for money-making came to Richmond. As it turned out, this Southern revolution began to stir almost exactly at the same time that outside influences affected the Richmond Jews. As the immigrant families began to build up their bank accounts, as the little tailor shop became the chromium-plated, neon-lit dress shop, as the young Jewish doctors developed large and lucrative practices, the papers were filled with daily stories of the Nazi persecution.

For the old families, this was a matter for polite if heartfelt horror. They could not possibly feel the personal involvement of the first or second generation Jew who realized that only a few years and miraculous good luck separated him from the possibility of the concentration camp and the gas chamber. The sixth generation Jew was more likely to feel the kind of sympathy felt by his Christian fellow-Southerners (for he dwelt in a region that was ardently anti-German and interventionist long before Pearl Harbor). But he was disturbed, too, by the fear that constant newspaper repetition of the unhappy events in Europe would have a harmful impact locally, that it would call attention to his Jewishness and give him a vulnerability

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that he thought had been buried with his ancestors. His reaction, in sum, was not unnatural in the circumstances: resentment, irritation, a certain embarrassment.

For the more recently arrived Jews, there was a different but equally human reaction—deeper, more emotional, more outspoken, and perhaps more masochistic. They sought an outlet for their revulsion; if they could do little to stop Hitler by themselves, they demanded the minimum satisfaction of strong language—the kind of language which the minority, the leading old families, considered "bad public relations." It was inevitable that the rising Jewish middle class should, at this point, begin to question the old leadership. By the time the war ended, it was possible to translate all their anxieties and resentments and guilt feelings into positive action. The remnants of Europe's Jews were in the DP camps, desperately awaiting aid. The drive to build a Jewish state in Palestine took on a new, dramatic urgency.

Rabbi Calisch had sensed all this even as the war was going on, and, as one of his last activities, he helped found the anti-Zionist American Council for Judaism. With him, most of the old families tended to see in Zionism a threat to their own status in Richmond, and perhaps even to their hope that one day they would achieve full social equality. The concept of any form of Jewish nationalism was alien to their whole way of life. It was hardly surprising that they should have made of Richmond a stronghold of Jewish anti-Zionism.

But the emotional stirrings among the newcomers were too vital to accept all this. The newly wealthy, the newly successful, the newly confident, could not be impressed with arguments that raising large sums of money for the United Jewish Appeal, for example, would antagonize their Christian neighbors. Having both money and energy, they began to assert their own leadership.

Before the war, a Jewish Community Council had been established under Beth Ahabah leadership to raise money in a modest way for various charitable causes. Now it was taken over as the vehicle for the high-pressure fund-raising so familiar in other cities. There was an immediate response. In 1945, the Council collected $118,000; in 1946 the collections jumped to $309,000; last year the Council raised $431,000, with at least eighty-five per cent of all Jewish families contributing. These totals may not match other communities of equal size and wealth, which have had a psychological head-start; but it is the rate of increase that is significant. For this rate of increase stands in direct proportion to the shift in power from the old and settled families to the new and aggressive ones.

Several years ago the B'nai B'rith lodge (once a virtual Beth Ahabah stronghold, now no longer so) sponsored the creation of a Jewish Community Center, over the violent opposition of the old families, who considered the idea to reek of separatism. After much controversy, a small building was taken over, but it burned down recently. This year the Community Council is raising almost fifty thousand dollars for a new one; the Center and the "Jewish activities" planned for it are regarded by the new leadership as a victory over "the old way of thinking."

What is actually happening now, however, is that the two forces, the one stable and rooted and conservative, the other aggressive and new and emotionally involved, have begun to find a common meeting ground. The Council itself is no longer run by a tight little board of aristocrats; it now has twenty-eight members, from all segments of the community, who probably emerge from their wrangling with a close approximation of what the Richmond Jews as a whole would wish.

Nor do these wishes mean the disavowal of everything associated with the past. It is apparently possible to be a Zionist and at the same time to accept Richmond's belief that, while everyone presumably has ancestors, only the privileged have ancestors who lived in Richmond. Both old and new families have so far resisted the arguments of the earnest young social worker who believes that

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the Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association ought to change its name to something less redolent of 19th-century charity. The Ladies Hebrew Benevolent Association, after all, succored Confederate wounded in the War Between the States. If the name was good enough for those heroes, it is good enough for the leading Richmond Jewish social agency in our own prosaic time.

So the new trend is having its effect on the relative newcomers as well as on the old-timers. The old-timers are not at all as anti-Zionist as they used to be; they have learned that no one in town will cut them dead if they contribute handsomely to the UJA; and they have learned to respect the drive and common sense of many of the new leaders. As for the latter, they have mellowed a little in their resentment against the cautious ideology of the aristocracy. Their Zionism, certainly, is by no means so melodramatic as in many other communities. Their attitude toward Israel is far more likely to involve disinterested and genuine sympathy than passionate devotion. The question of dual loyalty, which disturbs some people in other cities, would be ridiculous here. Both the old Jewish families and the new ones have, during the war and in the peace, played leading roles in city-wide civic and philanthropic activities, from war bond drives to community chest campaigns.

Curiously enough, the oldest old-timers and the newest newcomers among Richmond's Jews seem to hold identical standoffish attitudes toward the Negroes, though for utterly different reasons. The old families have tended to adopt the classical-romantic posture of mammy-nursed paternalism toward "the colored element." Among the newcomers, mostly small shopkeepers, there often exists the tradesman's contempt for the Negro customer who is considered less trustworthy than the white; and the feeling is reciprocated by many Negroes, who waste no love on such contacts with the white world. But these are the extremes. Between the two, most Richmond Jews fall into what is now clearly an American Jewish pattern of liberal behavior as far as Negroes are concerned. The most striking case of tangible advancement in Negro-white employment practices is being conducted quietly and effectively by a Jewish merchant (who feels that its value would be vitiated by public discussion in the present experimental stage). And about one-third of the money contributed locally to organizations aiming to further Negro rights comes from Jews—an amount obviously out of proportion to the Jewish population.

THE synagogues remain the key to Richmond's Jews. Beth Ahabah's membership has swelled tremendously in the five years since Dr. Calisch's death. Nearly every old Jewish family can still be counted among the six hundred or so that belong to it, but an increasing number are those who ten years ago would have been excluded on genealogical grounds. Conservative Beth-El, next in size, this year dedicated a new temple, an uncompromisingly modern structure of which its members are extremely proud. The Orthodox Beth Israel combines the remnants of the old synagogues of Polish and Russian Jews, and is now the smallest of the three leading congregations.

(There is a fourth, a little *shul* named Aitz Chaim, where a few old folks pray without benefit of rabbis holding theological doctorates or of sermons on current events of a Sunday morning. Aitz Chaim has no great significance in the social scheme; the young folks are not attracted to it, and its dwindling membership is content to be left alone with the old-time religion. Besides, everyone in town knows that sooner or later Aitz Chaim will be absorbed by Beth Israel.)

The three synagogues are what count. Their combined membership probably runs as high as sixteen hundred families, a larger percentage of the total Jewish population than is usual in Northern cities. Services are generally well attended. The rabbis of all three are young and ambitious, with smooth faces and a remarkable similarity in sonorous pulpit diction.

By and large, you can still identify nearly any Jew in Richmond by his synagogal affiliation. It is not entirely an economic yard-

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stick, for there are frayed aristocrats who show themselves at Beth Ahabah to hear the Sunday sermon, just as there are wealthy Russian-born Jews who attend Friday evening services at Beth Israel. The scale is social, and, therefore, still genealogical: Beth Israel harbors most Jews born in Eastern Europe, and many of their children; Beth-El is predominantly second and third generation; and Beth Ahabah consists mostly of people whose grandparents, at least, were born in the United States.

Like all human relationships, of course, these distinctions are too flexible and fluid to be quite as simple as this. In a single family, you may find members of two different synagogues (though rarely of three); and indeed there are a few Richmond Jews who, for reasons of their own, hold membership in two congregations. More significantly, there are many families in which the parents belong to one congregation, while the children, having grown up and established families, belong to another.

As for the young people who are not yet settled enough to think in terms of social barriers and hesitations, they are the purest evidence of the revolution that has taken Richmond. In school and college, and during the war, they mixed easily with people from other backgrounds, ignoring the old constricting patterns. The rate of intermarriage with Christians, as well as of intermarriage among Jews from differing social backgrounds inside Richmond, has in consequence been high in the past five or six years.

These intermarriages are, in most people's opinion, usually successful. The city absorbs nearly any new development having to do with marriage and family and children, for these bespeak stability and continuity. The city also keeps a firm hold on most Jewish young people, whether intermarried or not; for the changing social pattern has been accepted by them as a matter of course, and the prospect of business and professional opportunity in Richmond is altogether attractive (more so, apparently, than for many ambitious young non-Jews who go north to seek their fortunes).

NEVERTHELESS, for the community as a whole, the three synagogues are steps in the social ladder, progressing from Orthodox Beth Israel to Conservative Beth-El to Reform Beth Ahabah. Since the barriers to Beth Ahabah have been lowered, the congregation has become the largest in the community. Similarly, the Jefferson Lakeside Country Club, once a Beth Ahabah stronghold, has opened its doors to relative newcomers—hampered only by lack of space to absorb the flood of membership applications.

The new content of Richmond's Jewishness thus lies almost wholly in synagogue membership for social purposes, and in the giving of funds for humanitarian purposes. The ghost of Rabbi Calisch may shudder at the implication of social climbing, or at the uses to which these funds are put. But the change has come, and no one could stop it now. Neither does anyone know where it will end. If Rabbi Calisch, as has been claimed, did not succeed in giving his coreligionists the "inner Jewish content" with which to cope with the calamities and the ideologies of the past ten years, neither have the new communal leaders so far provided Richmond's Jews with anything newer than a crisis psychology which is stale by now.

This, perhaps, is why no new Jewish image has emerged for the Richmond Christians. The whole South is changing; Richmond is changing; and the Richmond Jews are changing too. But the changes are still so fluid that Richmond, with its adherence to the past, prefers to adhere to the recognizable symbols.

"Dr. Calisch continues to represent the Jew for most of us," said Virginius Dabney, the distinguished editor of the Richmond *Times Dispatch*. "Everyone admired him. He was a fine man."

"But Dr. Calisch is no longer alive. What has replaced him as the symbol of the Jew in Richmond?"

"Well," said Mr. Dabney, "after all, it has been only a few years since Rabbi Calisch died."

Who will wear the mantle in the new Richmond of the generation ahead?

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BOOKS FOR JEWISH CHILDREN

The Limits of the Didactic Approach

ISA KAPP

THERE was once a time when very few children's books were published and children roamed like explorers through adult libraries, investing Dickens and Defoe with all the credulity and awe of their own fantasy world. Now it is quite the reverse: the adult treads heavily into the nursery with his own anxieties, his own obligations.

If we are to judge from a recent sampling* of "wholesome" (and undisguisably feminine) books for Jewish juveniles, a Jewish renaissance should flower under the leadership of children from four to nine.

The small American Jews of this sententious literature live from one holiday to the next ("As soon as Pesach was over Danny would begin asking, 'Now will it be Shavuos?' "), are obsessed by images of *Shabbes chala* and candles ("I must hurry, hurry, hurry/What a worry, worry, worry/See the sun has almost set/I've no Sabbath candles yet"), and already long for Eretz Yisrael ("I'll sing the holy Kiddush/And drink the holy wine/And then when I'm a real big man/I'll go to Palestine").

These sunny tales and verses, it is very apparent, were intended to minister to the heart's ease of the parent rather than to the imagination of the child. (An old parental trick, to bequeath one's guilt to one's children.)

One can well understand the troubling sense of their own lapse from the Jewish tradition which affects the present generation of parents. Raised in an age of debunking and depression, they rebelled against an Orthodoxy that seemed to keep them from becoming (according to their politics) either true Americans or true internationalists. If they came to *seders* or fasted on Yom Kippur, it was only to keep the older folks from apoplexy. Two decades later, when support of Israel has become a substitute (or parallel) loyalty for a languishing social idealism, they

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AN ATMOSPHERE of anxious concern surrounds the production of Jewish books for children. Can they be counted on to make our youngsters conscious, self-respecting Jews? Or—others ask—do they stress Jewish uniqueness (or Israeli prowess) so much as to separate and estrange Jewish children from the common American life? This is a field in which ideologists, educators, group workers, social scientists, and just plain parents have done a good deal of theorizing; and quite a few bright-jacketed books have been coming off the presses. Here ISA KAPP offers some reflections on several recent representative examples. Though Miss Kapp does not claim to be an "expert" in the field, some will consider as no small qualification for her task the keen, sensitive observation of the ways of life of American Jews, adults and children, which her writing has shown, as well as the fact that she is sufficiently young to remember what it felt like to be a child. We invite comment on her opinions, and plan to print in early issues other articles, from diverse points of view, on this and other phases of Jewish children's education.

**Adventure in Palestine,* by Judith Ish Kishor (Messner. 241 pp. $2.50); *American Promise,* by Sulamith Ish Kishor (Behrman House. 209 pp. $2.50); *ABC Bible and Holiday Stories,* by Daisy Phillip Aronoff (Bloch. 60 pp. $2.00); *Boot Camp,* by Henry J. Berkowitz (Jewish Publication Society. 350 pp. $2.00); *Habibi and Yow,* by Althea O. Silverman (Bloch. 108 pp. $2.00); *Israeli Tales and Legends,* by Arnold Posy (Bloch. 270 pp. $3.00); *Jolly Jingles for the Jewish Child,* by Ben Aronin (Behrman House. 62 pp. $2.00); *Little New Angel,* by Sadie Rose Weilerstein (Jewish Publication Society. 152 pp. $2.00); *The Bible Legend Book,* by Lillian S. Freehof (Union of Hebrew Congregations. 240 pp. $2.25); *The Jingle Book for Jewish Children,* by Ben-Ami (Shilo. 46 pp. $1.75); *The Little Tractor Who Traveled to Israel,* by Evelyn Levow Greenberg (Behrman House. 48 pp. $1.00); *The Palace of Eagles,* by Sulamith Ish Kishor (Shoulson Press. 216 pp. $2.50); *The Stranger Within Thy Gates,* by Sulamith Ish Kishor (Shoulson. 206 pp. $2.50); *Torchbearers of the Middle Ages,* by Alvin S. Luchs (Behrman House. 176 pp. $2.00).

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are shame-faced Jews who hardly remember how to observe a Jewish ritual. Rushing to fill the vacuum, they make themselves familiar with Sholom Aleichem and the Hasidim, and indoctrinate their children with a vengeance. A sensitized, conscious Judaism—lore and rite—is their desperate legacy to their children, the dividends of which are meant some day to revive both parents and children as Jews.

THERE is, fortunately, a close alliance between Jewish piety and Jewish pleasure: perhaps no other holidays can so gratify the actual senses as the palpable cleanliness and indulgence of Passover, the rural nostalgia of Sukkos, and the masquerading and play-acting of Purim. But what child would really focus his desires and emotions on these pleasures to the exclusion of his ordinary (and, as a matter of fact, entirely absorbing) American life? In Rose Golub's *Down Holiday Lane*, grandparents come to visit bearing gifts. "A *lulov* and *esrog* for Sukkos!" shout Leo and Hulda, as if they had been given a chemistry set or a 42nd Street turtle. "Ho," chants a ritualistic little Jew, "it's fun to be horses on Shabbes," as if the game required sanctification. When dolls are named, it's never Sylvia, Shirley, and Sadie: nothing less dignified than Rebekah, Judah Maccabee, or Zipporah will do.

Jewish tradition contains a rich variety of legend and custom that will directly beguile children who are exposed to it, and it is a pity to cut such natural material to the model of adult design. If the child is later to accept his Jewishness he had better simply experience it for himself from the beginning. And in the cultural medley which the American climate allows, there is every reason for him to be encouraged to experience it as fully as possible, for his earliest outlook to be colored and reinforced by a specialized knowledge and tone.

But a tone (and it seems to me the Jewish tradition consists in large part of tone—if not *tam*) can only be absorbed haphazardly and to a large extent unconsciously, in the gradual, thoughtless way that a child comes to know that he is American, that his home is in the city, that he is more interested in science than in music. There is a difference between overhearing a family joke and memorizing a sugared jingle, the difference between spontaneity and artifice. No city child suddenly brought into an arbor decorated with fruit and leaves needs mechanical words: "Let's build a *sukka*/It's always such fun/I know you'll be glad/When our *sukka* is done." No actor of the be-rouged and be-costumed troupe that confidently demands its Purim contributions in the neighborhood hallways will be interested in lyrical declarations: "Oh Purim's such fun/For girls and for boys/We turn our *greggars*/And make lots of noise." The real fun is to be left to one's own devices, to stare unnoticed at busy adults, to discover unexpected gestures and voice intonations, to become a Jew by free association.

What the purist lady authors will not believe is that an American child can become a Jew despite the impure, confusing existence he leads, and in the context of the communal games, outbursts of violence, and variations of ego-display that are common to all children. Either he will be ardently and exclusively Jewish, they reason, or he is lost to us. "Dear Dick," writes a properly raised youngster in one of these works of fiction, to his erstwhile enemy. "You remember what Miss Green said about Rosh Hashana and Yom Kippur. She said, all Jews are brothers. If we have any quarrels, we must make them up and be friends." In another story, a large American flag turns up on the center wall of a *sukka*, apparently in irrelevant and worried concern over double loyalty. But in most cases the mixture of cultural loyalties in American life is hushed up, on the theory, supposedly, that children can learn only one thing at a time.

IN FACT, however, childhood is the age of dilettantism, guiltless promiscuity, and dogged investigation. Children thrive on divided loyalties and stark contradictions. Isabel Bolton, in her novel *The Christmas Tree*, describes the power of the movies to enthrall a small boy's mind: "And even when these

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spell-binding scenes of murder, mystery, and passion had been exchanged for the fiction and fantasy of a Disney cartoon, he had endured the transition without protest or expostulation, quite at home in this mad world where nothing could surprise but everything exhilarate. . . . Perhaps that had been . . . the beginning of his assumption that life was preparing for him an endless sequence of enthralling joys, for having learned this trick of walking back and forth, with no disturbance to his sanity, between the two dear worlds of his delight—the world, on the one hand, of Gargantuan side-splitting mirth and multiplication of merriment, and on the other, the hair-raising, the blood-curdling, the nightmare world of horrendous crimes and plots and punishments—his demands had grown exorbitant."

If movies do not constitute the whole childish landscape, they do account for and project many of its real elements. The child who has been exposed to the flickering lure of the movies at once loses his innocence and no longer expects the world to be simple. He can now be all things to himself: swimmer and bookworm, leader and apostle, atheist and Jew. It would constitute a cultural lag to be maidenish with this stoic, to pussyfoot about violence, or about any of the facts of his world, to approach him coyly.

Nevertheless, in a story by Sadie Rose Weilerstein, the normal procedure of childbirth is mutilated by the feminine imagination: at the Sabbath dinner, the family's voices rise up in secret wishful conception of a baby brother ("The Sabbath Queen could see them going up—in thin whirls of breath with music notes dancing in them"). Because there is so much joy in the room, an angel appears, and when it comes time for him to leave, the Sabbath Queen promises he can return to the family in the shape of a baby brother. While he is up in heaven waiting for his entrance cue, he studies the same Bible verses as his sisters-to-be on earth, but when he finally arrives he is as ignorant as a new-born babe because "the nicest part of having a baby brother is to watch him learn." Grandma announces him: "Mother has something new for you for Rosh Hashana. I'll give you three guesses." It seems quite possible that such well-meant euphemisms betray a certain disgust with the human body and its emotions. Certainly children, who are much less squeamish in every sense than adults (the bloodworms, crabs, and frogs that bring a shudder to the most insensitive grown-up will be freely and lovingly handled by the most timid child), need no awkward substitutes for facts, which are a source of endless fascination to them.

Only a person who has seen the cold disdain in the eyes of a child listening to baby talk can realize how futile it must be to tell him stories of dogs who bow their heads in "*Shabbat shalom,*" and of foxes who run to prayer and rise for Kiddush, of birds who say their Sabbath rest. Ben-Ami, who wrote the text for *The Jingle Book for Jewish Children,* was shrewd enough to challenge rather than to condescend. He follows up his apparently aimless jingles with a sudden worrisome question that will plague his readers till they find the answer. After a poem identifying animals, he demands: "Can you draw a whale or a rabbit? Can you make them out of clay?" Describing the noises in Noah's ark, he persists: "Have you ever seen a *live* cow?" His poem says, offhandedly: "Every lion/ Has a bite/Is big and roary/Full of fight/ But every lion/Near to Daniel/Was as gentle/As a spaniel." The question probes even further: "Do you know the story of Daniel in the lion's den?" Most pleasing of all is the concrete materialist question that follows a *dreidel* song: "Is your *dreidel* made of wood or clay?"

Ben-Ami seems to recognize, as very few children's authors do, that a 20th-century child, living at a heightened, nervous 20th-century pace, expects, needs, and can manipulate—even more than children of previous ages—ideas and words that are beyond his full grasp. Novelty, elusiveness, deduction, are all part of the *coup* he has to make on language; and in that way they become part of his natural life, and he can extend them to all kinds of knowledge, eventually to aesthetics and morals. For while the adult is gener-

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ally hostile to what he does not understand (which is the trait we mean by "philistinism"), the child is by nature quite the opposite, an avant-gardist.

MY MAIN quarrel with this library of books for Jewish children is that by worrying most about the child as a Jew, the writers have forsaken the Jew as a child, who needs to have his literature filled with varied, lively words and ingenious notions. The authors are very much in the position of girls who set themselves to find husbands in a hurry: the pressure of time and singlemindedness shove out of the way the possible accompanying graces. Thus the stories, whether domestic or legendary, are too much to the point (the point being always Jewish history or habits) to contain the luxury of charm. It can be said quite fairly that in such of these books as are for younger children there is hardly a challenging thought or an original turn of phrase. And yet it is known that children relish difficulty and like certain words for their intricate sounds. Anis Duff, who in *Bequest of Wings* has written very engagingly and spiritedly about her children's reactions to books, tells how, after reading *Peter Rabbit,* which is full of startling or onomatopoeic words, her son (aged four), peering anxiously at one of his boats that had got washed in under a log, exclaimed to it: "I implore you to exert yourself." Her daughter chose words for their physical characteristics that appealed to her—"torso" because of its roundness, "styptic" for (I imagine) its aggressiveness, and "lapis lazuli" probably for its exotic quality. "All words," says Mrs. Duff, "belong to children. They choose them for their own use by the simple process of selecting the ones they need to express what they want to say. . . . Children, like the rest of us, need to be articulate, and it seems to me a withholding of what is properly theirs, to limit their experience of words to the vocabulary already possessed by an an 'average' child of any given age."

Now I am not suggesting that the publishers of reading matter for Jewish children are deliberately impoverishing the vocabulary of their books, but rather that poverty is the by-product of their more serious intention. Observe the thin gruel of an instructive Jewish story:

"So the next Sabbath afternoon, after Michael had had his nap—and Daddy had had a Sabbath nap too—the family set out for Paoli's.

"They walked, and they walked, and they walked—past little houses and big houses and stores and garages and vacant lots.

"I never knew our street was so long, said Ruthie.

"(The Paolis lived on the same street as Ruth and Debby but away down, at the other end.)

"Even the sidewalks were gone now. The street had turned into a road.

"See the robin, Michael, said Ruthie.

"See the dandelion," etc.

Now compare this with the strong flavor and thick texture of the insouciant *Peter Rabbit:*

"Pony Billy got out of the bog with a jump and a scramble up the steep grassy slope of the hill. Round and round and round he went underneath the oaks, always going widdershins, contrary to the sun; always leaving back and front misleading marks behind him. Six times round he went; and he saw nothing but the bluebells and the oaks. But the seventh time round he saw a little Jenny Wren, chittering and fussing round an old hollow tree."

LANGUAGE and style have never really put themselves at the service of those writers who did not court them for their own sake. They balk at the first signs of ulterior pedagogical or ideological motives. That is why, to find the best writing for children, we have to turn from contemporary, occasional stories to classics that were written simply for the pleasure of fabrication, arrangement, and diversion. And it is not until we take another look at Andersen, Grimm, Ruskin, Kipling, Milne, that we can feel sufficiently ashamed of our little drudge of a Jewish library. Andersen starts his *The Snow Queen* in a business-like and mystifying way:

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"He was an evil goblin. He was one of the very worst, for he was the demon himself.

"One day he was in a very good humor, for he had made a mirror that had this peculiarity—everything good and beautiful that was reflected in it shrank to almost nothing, but whatever was worthless and ugly became prominent and looked worse than it really was. The loveliest landscapes, seen in this mirror, looked like boiled spinach, and the best people became hideous, or stood on their heads and had no bodies."

Although we know *The Snow Queen* to be an allegorical diatribe against science and rationalism (in the typical 19th-century spirit), we see how subservient Andersen made his polemic to his serene, affectionate prose. The magical story that makes use of the most prosaic elements of his world—flowers, snow, crows—transforms them into something inexplicably exotic and haunting. Before we are finished, we have heard of reindeer, of Lapp women and Finnish women, of cannibals and robber girls, of kindness, loneliness, and fear, and all this in the midst of adventures and a long search. Andersen may have invested his adventures with a single idea, but in his writing this idea sets no strict boundaries to thought, emotion, or language.

It is just this boundlessness which ought to be the adult's bequest to the child. The worst affront to a childish mind, which is willing indefinitely to unfold, to absorb, to be curious—is to present it with closed spheres of experience, with concepts that are already concluded and immutable. There ought, on the contrary, to be endless avenues of possibility, all manner of conflict, and even insoluble problems, rather than permanently solved ones. No knowledge can hurt a child: he has the immunity of his age. It is a reflection of our adult anxieties to be cautious for his sake.

THE books for very young readers show a need to keep the audience at home, securely tied to the maternal apron-strings—there is a very close relation in these stories between being a good Jew and being a good child. The jovial escapades of the young very often consist of shopping, dusting furniture, and acting as long-suffering baby-sitters on permanent call. I do not want to make too great a point of the restricting effect of having so many books written by women and mothers, but the fact cannot be avoided that the larger part of the most resourceful, inventive, and experimental writing for children has been done by men.

In the group of books for older readers, the problem, as I have mentioned, is not so much one of limiting information or harping on sentimental truisms. Some volumes are carloads of geological and historical fact, but again, the facts are in the service of a conscious Jewishness and move heavily in their work of persuasion. *Israeli Tales and Legends,* which might, by virtue of their heroic struggles and their invocation of the miraculous, have a natural appeal, lumber under a weight of piety. In most cases the Jew, who represents the martyric Good, is put to the test of Job-like persecutions at the hands of satanic anti-Semites. All contests are won, all evil routed, through the persistence of Jewish faith and virtue. The same morality is part even of the absorbing secular stories of Sulamith Ish Kishor, who is probably the most intelligent and original writer on Jewish subjects for children. Although, as Anna Freud has pointed out, children between eight and ten are vividly engrossed in conflicts between good and evil in the world (having recently experienced the same struggle internally), is it really useful to let Jewishness become identical with the quality of abstract goodness? It is not only that the obtruding myth violates the complexity and truth of Jewish history, but that the morality, being general and confused with national pride, can no longer be precise and personal.

THIS does not mean in the least that morality (which must be distinguished from sermonizing or imposing opinions) need be pushed out of children's literature. It does mean that moral issues had best be presented as they exist in the world, that is, in their realistic contexts and proportions, or else, pos-

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sibly, in a pure symbolic form as, for example, to illustrate some Biblical text. Thus Sulamith Ish Kishor's fairy tale *The Palace of Eagles* begins very simply with King Solomon's loss of humility before God, and then, by proceeding symbolically instead of literally, becomes more and more fanciful and atmospheric, but no less authentic.

Hugh Lofting's well-known Dr. Dolittle books are full of notions of right and wrong, but they pop up in the most practical forms, in the midst of a whirl of activity and in the context of natural sympathies. When Dr. Dolittle's caravan of animals is a roaring success in the Canary Opera, they are suddenly faced with the problem of what to do with money, and also, since they are solicited by all kinds of industrialists, with the evils of advertising. These latter evils are demonstrated with absolute clarity and poignancy when Gub Gub, a performing pig very popular with audiences, is asked to stand in a butcher's window and skip up and down with a rope made of pork sausages. The caravan agrees to advertise only comfortable and healthful animal equipment, thus turning vice into virtue. But although the Dr. Dolittle books champion the weak and expose charlatans, they are basically concerned with non-moral matters, with pleasure and vanity and making a living, with the art of communication, with exploration and geniality, with alien lands and sea voyages and leisurely conversation. They constitute a humanist library, and their enduring charm suggests that we would do better to make humanists out of our children than moralists.

Two incidents from what is called real life may be relevant here.

A progressively educated child, who was recently looking for a book to borrow, found one with "Palestine" in the title, and immediately put on the face of an old woman imparting her life's *tzores*.

"I don't like books about Palestine," he said piteously.

"Why not?"

"Because (breathlessly) Hitler is bad. Pharaoh is bad. He made people into slaves and they had to work without being paid." (Hesitation, then a gleam of triumph.) "But Abraham Lincoln freed them!"

On another occasion, a teacher asked her class how many states there are in the union. One excited child cried out, "Forty-nine."

"Why forty-nine?" he was asked.

"Because there is a new state, Israel, and that makes forty-nine," was the confident reply.

At seven history was still out of focus for these children, but the power to declare allegiance and make moral judgments was in full play. It is not the adult's function to give the child this power of judgment, but only to open locked doors, and reveal hidden rooms. Judgments and allegiances will be undertaken soon enough, but in the dominion of childhood it is more important to gratify curiosity than conscience. More than one generation of American youth has been inspired with patriotic American fervor through a reading of Kipling's and G. A. Henty's accounts of British imperial heroes; the same children who hiss the British when they reenact the Boston Tea Party, identify themselves with Clive of India and George Washington at one and the same time. The ability to confound simple ideologies is the test of a really good book.

JEWISH children's literature suffers not only from the imposition of the ethical values of its adult authors, but also from their parochial intellectual standards. It is obvious, for instance, that the authors under discussion have never been told about—or else have forgotten—the impassioned, fanatical devotion of children of certain ages to machines and everything connected with them. They seem unaware that the child is by nature a mechanic and an inventor; the Disney world is his oyster because in it the logic of the mechanism takes control—the heroes are subject to the interior laws of a clock or a piano, they are hurtled through space, deflated, wound up and invigorated, all by means of mechanical devices. But a child could plow through a dozen of these books without hearing the raucous hum of a motor or seeing a sketch of a metallic object. A barren Arcadia! The

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single oasis is *The Little Tractor That Went to Israel;* but even here the reader will sense immediately that the writer's feelings are centered not on the internal intricacies of the tractor, but on the lyrical patriotic geography of Palestine.

Children need to establish a tactile control of the universe. In order to be at home there they have to know its physical techniques: how things are constructed, why they move, and even how they smell and feel. They are inordinately fond of abandoned birds' nests because they can find them, examine them, see how they were put together, and handle the eggs. Joseph Altsheler's novels of the French and Indian Wars are recalled with affection precisely because they were so full of physical appreciations: senses, skills, the use of hands and feet, the presence of animals; how to walk in the woods without making a sound; how to detect the approach of an enemy. Although the young heroes are on the side of the English, the books' and the readers' real admiration is for the Indian enemy—his craft, his strength, and his lordly knowledge of terrain.

But in the books for Jewish children, except for the writings of Sulamith and Judith Ish Kishor, smell, taste, and texture are kept in humble roles, and the action takes place in higher realms. Henry J. Berkowitz's *Boot Camp,* for example, which is the story of a Jewish boy's initiation into the Navy, and which should have been an enjoyable early adolescent boy's book in the sporting manner of Ralph Henry Barbour's prep school series, bears instead the full responsibility of Jewish self-assertion. It is permeated by a kind of belligerent, defensive Jewishness that has to prove itself by outfighting, outswimming the Gentiles, by out-normalizing normalcy. Dr. Berkowitz, who was a naval chaplain, has set superman standards for his Jews, which imply that if a Jew were small and unathletic, he would lose all chance of Gentile respect.

Much more sensible for the young adolescent reader is the approach of Judith Ish Kishor's *Adventure in Palestine,* which emphasizes not the Jewishness of its hero, but his heroism. What this book lacks in subtlety is somehow made up for in vivacity and in direct interest in foods, places, and people. It spiritedly describes all the things that make children look for travel books in libraries. Its rambling plot has room for swimming as well as kidnaping, boasting as well as conniving. Best of all, it treats Palestine as one more strange, explorable place. From the rollicking tone adopted, this might be an adventure in the Congo as easily as in "the Jewish homeland." This tone does not diminish the importance of Palestine, it merely allows the reader of twelve to enjoy what he understands and defer judgment upon what he has still to work out in his mind in relation to many other kinds of knowledge.

THE truth is that even at twelve the child is not yet a Jew, though he has already absorbed those habits and inclinations that will some day make him ready to become one. He is not yet even an American, and most surely not an Israeli. As yet he is a world citizen, and rarely, without imposition, a stridently loyal member of any nation or religion: as a child he is willing to explore—Israel as well as the Bronx zoo, but certainly not the former to the exclusion of the latter, which he will come to know so much more concretely. He is still an individual, and this is the quality we have most to respect in him.

There is no such thing as a mass of children, and almost no such thing as a childish type—only endless forms of awkwardness and grace, unpredictable gestures of affection and rebellion, and infinite curiosity. These are the qualities that a child's literature must appeal to, if he is to reach his adult Jewishness on terms suited both to his own nature and to the Jewish tradition itself.

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THE JEWS OF KURDISTAN

A First-Hand Report on a Near Eastern Mountain Community

WALTER J. FISCHEL

WHEN I set out to visit Kurdistan I was aware that Jewish communities existed in such towns as Kirkuk, Arbil, and Mosul. Yet the fact that there were Jews scattered all over the mountainous villages was brought to my knowledge by sheer accident, literally. An automobile smash-up on a dangerous and almost impassable mountain road, which resulted in the death of a villager, brought men and women of the nearest villages together to the market-place to mourn. The victim was a "Yahudi," I was told upon inquiry, and the people assembled there were all Jews from the neighboring villages.

I had never seen a more picturesque or impressive mourning assembly. Such Jews! Men virile and wild-looking; women wearing embroidered turbans, earrings, bracelets, even nose-rings, and with symbols tattooed into their faces—our brethren and sisters! When I asked one of the bystanders for his name, he answered, "Jonah." I replied, "Jonah ben Amitai," alluding to the name of the Biblical Prophet, Jonah, and he excitedly exclaimed, "Wallah, Shema Yisrael!" Yet he remained incredulous, taking me for an "Inglesi," until the words "Zion," "Yerushalayim," "Shema Yisrael," convinced him.

It was as a result of meeting these "Jonahs" that I decided to penetrate into the interior of Kurdistan and to visit their villages. I found hardly a village in those highlands that had no Jews, though there are usually not more than six or eight families, utterly isolated and, owing to the mountainous terrain, without contact with their fellow Jews of other village communities. Here one could readily understand the original, tragic meaning of exile and dispersion.

THERE is hardly a people in the Islamic Orient whose history and origin, language and customs are more unknown and less explored than those of the Kurds. Kurdistan is no political or geographical entity, has no fixed boundaries, and is generally meant to denote the territory in which the ethnic group of the Kurds lives; today, this area is divided mainly between Iran, Iraq, and Turkey, although there exists a large Kurdish diaspora in Asiatic Russia, Northern Syria, Luristan, and Khorasan.

If until modern times Kurdistan has remained a *terra incognita,* there are obvious reasons for that fact. Those who have penetrated the massive, rugged mountainous regions, passed the ravines and wide gorges, crossed the rapid torrents and swollen rivers, boiling cataracts and whirlpools, can see at first hand how nature itself has rendered Kurdistan an almost inaccessible fortress.

The scenery, with its many contrasts and constantly changing beauty, is matched only by the great diversity of its inhabitants. They are an incredible variety of religious, ethnic, and national groups. In addition to the

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Kurdish tribes, who form the bulk of the population, there are Arab and Turkoman tribes, Oriental Christian groups of many denominations (Nestorians, Assyrians, Armenians), Yezidis or so-called devil worshipers, Mandeans—in short, a living ethnological museum. Within this web of races, sects, and religions in this remote corner of Asia there also live, scattered over the entire mountainous region, "Remnants of Israel"—Jews—estimated at present at about eighteen thousand souls.

THE history of these Jews in Kurdistan, where they came from and when they settled there, is shrouded in great obscurity. The Biblical and Talmudic literature contain only a few vague references to this region. Most of the early Targum, Syriac, and Arabic sources identify Kurdistan with Kardu, or the land of the Kurdini, and with the territory of Mount Ararat, on which, according to tradition, the Ark of Noah rested after the deluge.

The Jews of Kurdistan themselves claim to be the descendants of the Ten Tribes, or at least the remnants of the Babylonian captivity—after all, why not? Actually, the first and only historical event bearing on Jewish settlements in Kurdistan goes back to the 12th century and is connected with the appearance (1146-1147) of the pseudo-Messiah David Alroy. Coming from Amadiyya in the central region of Kurdistan, an ancient stronghold of Kurdish feudal lords, he inititated a messianic movement which gained adherents among the Jewish communities as far as Urmia, Salmas, Tabriz, and Maragha in Persia. And, indeed, to this day, David Alroy is the only Jew from Kurdistan to enter recorded history.

One of our earlier sources of information about this Kurdish Jew, and Kurdish Jews in general, is the famous travelogue *Massoth Benyamin,* of Benjamin of Tudela, who visited many Oriental communities in Asia around 1170. Though neither Benjamin of Tudela nor other medieval Jewish travelers (such as Petachia of Ratisbon, or Yahuda al-Charizi, or the 16th-century Yemenite traveler and poet Zachariah ibn Saadya al-Dahiri) penetrated into the central region of Kurdistan, it is safe to conclude from these travelers' accounts, from references in the Gaonic literature, and from archaeological and linguistic indications, that even prior to the appearance of David Alroy, Jews had been living for many centuries in this part of the Asiatic world. That they continued to live in Kurdistan from the Middle Ages to the present is evidenced by documents found in their own Geniza from the 16th century on, and particularly by the *Travels of Rabbi David de Beth Hillel,* who in 1828 toured the interior of Kurdistan and left us a report which constitutes the best and most reliable source of our knowledge of this Oriental Jewish community in the 19th century.

THE peculiar mode of life of the Jews in this part of the globe arises from the social structure of the Kurdish tribesmen in whose midst they live. The Kurds have a highly developed tribal consciousness and the whole Kurdish population is organized on a tribal basis. Every Kurd is first and foremost not an Iraqi, a Turki, or an Irani, but a member of his tribe, and adheres to its law and custom; the shape, color, or form of the headgear and of the dress is, in most cases, an external sign of the tribal affiliation. The Kurd's authority is the feudal lord or Agha, the head of the tribe, to whom he subordinates himself. Each tribe is again divided into sections, sub-tribes, clans, and families, sometimes united in a tribal confederation, but more often at war with each other in inter-tribal battles. The tribes include the semi-nomadic of the plains and hills, the sedentary tribes in the mountains, and the pure nomadic, who migrate every season with their flocks into the territory of other tribes, causing raids and counter-raids, pillage, feuds, and unrest.

Within such a tribally organized society the Jews, different in religion, language, and habits, had no place. They gradually became the pariahs and outcasts, despised and degraded, in which condition they have re-

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mained until the present day. They were not permitted to carry arms or to engage in any tribal feud—and this in a country where a rifle or a dagger is deemed an indispensable companion even by the Kurdish women. For the sake of their very survival the Jews had, under these circumstances, to place themselves under the protection of the tribal chief, who dealt with "his" Jews as his own property. As in medieval serfdom, it was not uncommon to find Jews as well as Christians as slaves of the Agha, and although they were thus "protected," the hostilities among the various tribes took heavy toll of them.

It is true that the position of the Jews in Kurdistan as outsiders, belonging to no tribe, had certain advantages, economically and politically. The Jews were the only ones who could move from tribe to tribe, whether friend or foe, without being challenged on account of a tribal feud. This enabled some Jews to earn their livelihood as peddlers, making their tours, with their bundle on a mule or a donkey, across mountains and rivers, through dangerous territories of hostile tribes—though not infrequently falling victims to undiscriminating brigands.

A century ago, when Kurdistan formed a part of the Asiatic provinces of the Ottoman Empire, the pashas knew very well how to make use of the Jews, in their special position as "neutrals" and "outsiders" amid the never-ceasing tribal feuds. In his desire to extract as much money as possible from his subjects, by way of taxation, confiscation, and other methods, the pasha learned to employ the services and abilities of some of the non-Muslim subjects for his money-raising chores. Not only Jews, but also Christians became instruments for the carrying out of financial tasks entrusted to the pasha by the sultan in Constantinople, in exchange for which they could expect protection for their co-religionists. That is how some individual Jews in Kurdistan found themselves functioning at the beginning of the 19th century as court treasurers, tax-collectors, customs officials, or in similar capacities in the service of the pasha or his subordinates.

It may be assumed that the existence of these Jewish officials who, at the same time, were also the leaders of their small Jewish communities, created a certain stability and security. When, however, in 1832, the Turkish authorities decided to crush the spirit of resistance and rebellion of the tribal chieftains and feudal lords in Kurdistan, the Jews were severely affected by the struggle and bloodshed. As a consequence of the deterioration of their position, many Jews emigrated to Palestine. The gloomy picture painted by the travelers of the 19th century reflects the agony of these turbulent years. So bad, in deed, did conditions subsequently become that the intervention of the Chief Rabbi at Constantinople at the court of the Grand Vizier was sought; the ineffectiveness of such action is shown by the fact that the Kurdish Jews continued to appeal to the Alliance Israélite Universelle and to other Jewish authorities in Europe for intervention and help.

And although the political conditions in the Kurdistan of today have changed with the setting up of an independent Iraq, the contempt in which the Kurdish Jews were held, and the atmosphere of hatred, have remained unaltered.

THE occupational structure of the Kurdish Jews is quite different from that of other Oriental communities. While Jews in Bagdad and Basra could and did attain quite prominent positions in the 19th and 20th centuries, as lawyers, bankers, physicians, and big merchants—in the time of King Feisal I, there was even a Jewish Minister of Finance, Sassoon Yeshekiel Effendi—Jews in Kurdistan have had no such opportunities. Neither "intellectuals," "professionals," nor wealthy merchants existed among them. The Kurdish Jew was and is basically a laborer, a worker, engaged in physical work. In the course of my travels through all parts of Kurdistan, I encountered Jews who were weavers, tanners, dyers, woodchoppers, porters, boatmen.

It was an unforgettable occasion for me when I met in Amadiyya, the birthplace of

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David Alroy, a group of roadworkers, engaged in surfacing a highway, whose whole bearing, not less than their beards and their *"tsitsith,"* proclaimed them to be Jews. When I greeted them with "Shalom aleichem," they began to talk in their language, Aramaic, and it seemed as if we were in a colony somewhere in Emek Yisrael, in Palestine. Jews have also attained some fame as gold and silversmiths in Sulaimaniyya, where they almost monopolize this field.

Along with Jewish artisans and small merchants, there is a class of Jewish farmers, who manage to exist despite their legal and social disabilities. In a number of villages in Acra, Ushnu, Sukho, and Be Tenura, Jews own cattle, sheep, and goats, possess land, fields, and vineyards, and are engaged in agricultural occupations of all sorts. An outstanding case of a Jewish agricultural settlement is the village of Sandur near Dahok, on the way to Amadiyya. This is a Jewish village almost exclusively inhabited by about a hundred families of Kurdish Jews, administered by a Jewish headman, responsible in Turkish times to the pasha of Amadiyya, now to the Iraqi governor of the district. Sandur lies at the foot of a mountain range, surrounded by poplar trees, vineyards, and orchards, and its Jewish population, men and women, works in all branches of farming and handicraft. All through the 19th century travelers were attracted and impressed by this Jewish agricultural settlement in the very heart of the Kurdish mountains, by the beautiful gardens and fruit trees, the abundant flocks, the good waters, and excellent wines.

I, too, was greatly moved by the sight of Jews, working under a burning sun, digging and hoeing in their vineyards and fields, and singing Jewish-Aramaic melodies during their work. Powerfully-built men, a Jonah, an Ezra, a Zachariah, a Mordecai, a Hanoch, an Amos, and others, greeted me with their "shalom" and allowed me to investigate their old Geniza in the still well-preserved synagogue, built several centuries ago. The considerable size of their synagogue indicated that the congregation must have been much larger in previous times.

In their language the Kurdish Jews differ from their Moslem neighbors as well as from all other Jews in the Diaspora. Though Hebrew is understood by some of them and many can make themselves understood in one or another Kurdish dialect intermingled with Turkish, Persian, or Arabic words, their specific language is Aramaic. Aramaic was once the popular language of the Near East and the official language of the Babylonian Jews for many centuries, but it was replaced through the spread of Islam in the 7th century by Arabic. Only in Kurdistan and a few other small regions of the East has the linguistic conquest of the Arabic language been successfully resisted, so that until today Jews, as well as Christian Nestorians in Kurdistan, speak an Aramaic dialect. This Aramaic is closely related to the Aramaic portions of the Bible (in the Books of Ezra and Daniel), and very akin to the Aramaic of the Targum and the Talmud. Written in Hebrew script, which is also applied to the Kurdish, Persian, Arabic, or Turkish words, this language of the Kurdish Jews is variously called "Lishna Yahudiyya" ("the Jewish language"), "Lashon ha-Targum" ("language of the Targum"), and "Jebali" ("the mountain language"). Nowhere else in the Jewish world is Aramaic of any sort still a living and spoken language.

This linguistic separation of the Jews from their neighbors has had some practical advantages. Living within a tribal society, in which each tribe had its own peculiar dialect, Jews—scattered over hundreds of villages belonging to various tribes and clans—would have been hopelessly fragmented. The Aramaic dialect of the Kurdish Jews constitutes a bond of unity in the region of Kurdistan and Azerbaijan and the most reliable and characteristic criterion for a "Kurdish Jew."

It is this persistence of Aramaic, first noticed in early medieval times, then by Benjamin of Tudela, and later by David de Beth Hillel, which has drawn the attention of European scholars to the Kurdish Jews. In the last decades a systematic attempt has been made to commit to writing the hitherto

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unwritten literature of the Kurdish Jews, and texts in their special vernacular have been published, thus preserving in the written word their traditions, literature, and folklore.

It is hardly possible to speak of any accomplishments of the Kurdish Jews in the field of literature. Their cultural level has been as low as, if not lower than, that of their neighbors. Like the literature of the Mohammedan Kurds, that of the Kurdish Jews also consisted mainly of popular sayings, stories, songs, poems, and particularly translations into "Targum" or "Jebali" of ritual or liturgical treatises or Biblical books. One of the few outstanding authors among them was Simon ben Jonah al-Barazani, of the 17th century, one of whose manuscripts I brought back to Jerusalem. In recent years a Kurdish Jew, Baruch Samuel Misrachi, published, under the title *Shire Simra,* an anthology of folk songs in Aramaic, Hebrew, Kurdish, and Arabic; also, two cabalistic treatises by Elijah Abraham Misrachi have been printed in Jerusalem.

KURDISH Jews have only a few synagogues. Those which are still in existence are mostly old wooden structures, devoid of any ornamental or decorative attraction, in a state of utter neglect and decay and not infrequently used in part for storage of grain and other materials. The synagogue in Amadiyya contains an old Hebrew inscription on one of its wooden pillars which indicates that it was built seven centuries ago. Most of the Jewish settlements in the mountainous region, however, often with less than ten Jewish families, are lacking in all those religious institutions which are usually regarded as essentials for Jewish life. The first modern schools for Kurdish Jews were opened only at the beginning of the 20th century by the Alliance Israélite Universelle, in Mosul and Senneh.

Despite their lack of Jewish and general education, Kurdish Jews adhere very rigidly to their old traditions, and observe circumcision, dietary laws, family laws, and Sabbath observance. They are very strict in observing the Sabbath; during the past war, when Jews were occupied in road-building, the engineer in charge experienced that peculiar problem and reported: "The Jews were the most exacting of all in their observances. No Jew may work on a Saturday and perhaps that is why so few ever came to my camp."

In reaction to the isolation of Kurdish Jews, there grew up the institution of a wandering rabbi (not a "wonder" rabbi), who visited the communities at intervals of six months or even more, to perform ritual functions and inspire the people religiously. There also grew up a literature of correspondence between the larger centers and the smaller villages, which has revealed many interesting details of their internal life. Both their lives and their letters reveal one special feature: the great role which superstition and magic has played among them.

In their ideas and actions they are influenced by a belief in devils, demons or *shedim,* and the evil eye, not only in all matters pertaining to life and death, but in their everyday affairs. The use of amulets and *goraloth* is applied to almost every event in life. Even the art of the Jewish silversmiths is entirely dominated by magic. Amulet-boxes, silver chains, and jewelry of a special kind are used as a protection against the evil spirits. The belief in dreams and their influence on the life of man is also widespread. The analysis and interpretation of such dreams has become almost a profession inherited from ancestors and carried out by a *hacham.* Wherever he lives, his services for the supply of "spiritual" medicine, with the aid of some mysterious scribbling to ward off peril and diseases of all kinds, are greatly in demand by Jews as well as by Kurds, who regard him as a magician, fortune teller, wizard, and healer. When in search of ancient manuscripts in the houses of such *hachamim,* I found that most of the available works dealt with Cabala, talismans, *goraloth,* dream books, and the like.

Under the influence of their Moslem surroundings, the Kurdish Jews, like all Oriental Jews, have developed the custom of pilgrim-

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KAFKA: RITUAL WITHOUT RELIGION

The Modern Intellectual's Shamefaced Atheism

GUENTHER ANDERS

ALMOST insensibly the figure of Franz Kafka has usurped a dominant position in modern literature. And the evolution of his reputation has taken a typically contemporary direction: one critic after another has left the secular and speculative ground of literary analysis to seek the "message" at the heart of Kafka's prose, and, this "message" once discovered, to proclaim it as a modern prophecy.

How often have we heard that the only entrance to Kafka's world is through religion—indeed, that Kafka is the very embodiment of the religious impulse: *homo religiosus* in the flesh. Everyone familiar with the Kafka criticism knows the basic motifs ascribed to him: guilt, redemption, grace, transcendence, absolute might, sacrifice—all categories that cannot be discussed for a moment outside the bounds of religious discourse. And yet the sceptical critic who permits Kafka's work to speak for itself soon discovers that it is man's relation to *this* world, not to a beyond, which he describes with these categories borrowed from the idiom of religion. In fact, to state the case abruptly, for Kafka it is *this* world that actually represents the *beyond*, the *unobtainable*.

A paradox confronts us: the paradox of a writer who lives in an utterly godless world and practices no religion, but nevertheless considers himself a "religious man," calls his writing "a form of prayer," and eventually becomes an object of something like religious awe to a religiously indifferent intelligentsia. Significantly, also, Kafka's religious investiture does not connect him with any concrete religious concept; and it took place purely *within literature*, that is, within an area which for many years has been either completely a-religious or at least indifferent to the presence of religion. Behind this paradox one glimpses the problem not only of secularized religion, but also (if we may coin the word) of a "re-religiosified" secularism. Possibly if we can clarify Kafka's "religiosity," much that is unclear in the present spiritualizing tendencies among modern intellectuals may also be understood.

HEINE once remarked: "In Germany it is the theologians who put an end to the good Lord—one is never betrayed except by one's own." Indeed, if, as Lessing wrote, God himself raises man to that level of education where man comes of age and God becomes dispensable—then it is God (not only the theologians) who has rendered himself superfluous. A further stage was reached in the Protestant-influenced Hegel, who managed to annihilate the idea of God (while pretending to save it) by alloying the concept of "mind" which comes from the Book of Revelations with the concept of "*raison*" from the French Enlightenment. In a way, one can look upon the whole of German philosophy from Lessing to Hegel—that no-man's-land between science and

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OF THE many complex "interpretations" that have grown up around the writings of Franz Kafka, none has been more popular than the religious one; sometimes, indeed, it has seemed as if Kafka was not a literary man at all, but the prophet of a 20th-century gospel. What, actually, is the nature and significance of the religious element in Kafka's work? GUENTHER ANDERS tries to answer this question in terms of the entire history of modern man's retreat from God. Mr. Anders was born in Breslau in 1902, studied in Hamburg, Munich, Berlin, and Freiburg, and came to the United States in 1936. He has published poetry, criticism, and philosophical dialogues and fables. At present he teaches philosophy at the New School and is preparing two books: *Philosophy of Culture* and *Philosophical Diaries*.

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ages to holy places to visit the tombs of prophets and spiritual leaders. Even now, the alleged tomb of the prophet Ezekiel, near Hilla, the tomb of Ezra, near Kurna, the burial place of the high priest Joshua, in Bagdad, the tombs of Mordecai and Esther in Hamadan, of Shara Bat Asher, in Isfahan, and others, attract multitudes of Oriental Jews every year. In addition to these, Kurdish Jews have holy sites of their own. Most prominent among them is the alleged tomb of Jonah, near Nineveh, the sepulcher of Daniel and his three companions, in Kirkuk, and foremost, the supposed tomb of Nahum, the prophet, in Alkosh, to which yearly pilgrimages are made. It is this tomb of Nahum which seems to have the quality of a national sanctuary for the Kurdish Jews, and the description of the ceremonies of the pilgrimage and of the miracles experienced have been preserved in the travelogues of visitors. Whenever I ventured to inquire about the authenticity of these national shrines and holy sites, I was the target for menacing looks that made me quickly change the subject.

DESPITE the fact that these remote Jewish communities in the wild mountains of Kurdistan have been so isolated from the outside world, they have not ceased to cultivate cultural ties with the Jews in Palestine. The longing for Zion, which has persisted among them throughout the centuries, has expressed itself again and again in letters (we have some from the 18th century) sent from Amadiyya, Sacho, Sandor, and other communities to Safed, Tiberias, or Jerusalem. No doubt these feelings were enhanced and strengthened by those envoys from Zion, *sh'lichim,* who, during the last centuries, crossed the Euphrates and Tigris and the river Zab and penetrated into these remote regions in search of their brethren, as well as by the travelers to Kurdistan within the last decade. It is not surprising, then, that Kurdish Jews should have been among the first of all Oriental Jews who began to pour into Palestine as early as the first part of the 19th century, and no wonder that, during my tour through these villages, I was besieged with requests to procure certificates for emigration into Palestine.

Today Palestine has the greatest colony of Kurdish Jews outside their original native land, numbering well over 8500. They have established agricultural and urban settlements, and one of the agricultural colonies in the Emek significantly bears the name of "David Alroy"—the false Messiah who, the Kurdish Jews in Palestine now feel, may merely have been somewhat premature.

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religion—as a process in which religion was destroyed by those who allegedly wished to save it—and saved by its destroyers.

And saved by its destroyers! However correct it may be to represent the last century of German civilization as a continuing process of secularization, it is equally necessary to stress a counter-motif: the presentation of atheism itself in religious disguise. In Germany nothing was rarer than unequivocal and naked atheism. For a period it had existed outside the middle class: the example of Frederick II indicates that 18th-century disbelief was first an aristocratic monopoly. But when the Enlightenment, with its belief in reason and science, became the accepted ideology of the German bourgeoisie, the situation became unclear. For the ominous history of the German bourgeoisie divides into two parts: part one, when they were not yet self-confident; part two, when they were self-confident no longer. Before the bourgeoisie could become stable and homogeneous, before the feudal remnants had been dislodged, another powerful class—the proletariat—was already appearing, a class whose first act was to snatch from the bourgeoisie its own anti-clerical and anti-religious arguments, and turn them against it. In this situation, the bourgeoisie became utterly uncertain about its own deistic and atheistic position. As a result, unequivocal atheism could be found nowhere but in science and technology—fields where the formal denial of religion was as superfluous as it was obviously profitable.

There are many documents of the 19th century of which it is difficult to decide whether they *still* contain ancient religious vestiges or rather the germs of that process I have already referred to which makes the secularized again religious. Quite naturally, the development unfolded dialectically, not at all in the straightforward manner of a "return to religion" or a "conversion." On the contrary, each stage in the process of secularization became the further object of a new religious interpretation. Non-created, godless "Nature" became the object of pseudo-religious enthusiasm; the "Twilight of the Gods" was celebrated as an apocalypse; the unbeliever, the man doomed to stand on nothingness, was offered as a myth or pseudo-myth (Nietzsche's Superman); and the man who searched for God in vain interpreted his tragic experience as evidence of God's "retreat" (Rilke's *Duino Elegies*). All of these impressive, though highly ambiguous, variants belong to a still-to-be-written "History of Shamefaced Atheism" that would explain much about German civilization.

IT IS precisely against this background that Kafka assumes his definite profile.

"Some deny the existence of misery," Kafka writes (in the series of philosophical aphorisms entitled "He"), "by pointing to the sun; he denies the existence of the sun by pointing to misery." And: "The strength to deny . . . we possess always, but not the courage. . . ."

Taken seriously, this confession can only mean that Kafka wished to have the courage to live up to his denials. The situation of the unbeliever—to stand on nothingness—was the catastrophe that Kafka sought to ward off throughout his life. For years he interested himself in such dubious doctrines of redemption as Rudolph Steiner's anthroposophy—though to establish a resemblance between the rubbish of such backstairs-religion and Kafka's deadly seriousness would be ridiculous. And yet he *did* plunge into such speculations, if only because he had to plunge into something. And this urge to plunge into *something* that he could say "yes" to was so compelling that he even contented himself with the naked fact of existence—the bare "I am"—as the guarantee of belief.

"No one can say that we are wanting in faith," he says in his *Meditations*. "The mere fact of our living is itself inexhaustible in its proof of faith."—"You call that a proof of faith? But one simply cannot not live."—"In that very 'simply cannot' lies the insane power of faith; in that denial it embodies itself."

TODAY the most diverse intellectual groups seem to agree on one point. Looking

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back at the somewhat vague and diluted "religiosity" of the 19th century, they condescendingly blame their forefathers for having mistaken religiosity for religion and also for having forgotten what it means to be *engagé*. The words of Goethe's *Faust*—

Call it what you please,
Heart, Fortune, Love, or God
I have no name for it, for
Everything is feeling. . . .

—seemed to prove beyond doubt that they had not even known what they meant when they pretended to "feel" belief—if, indeed, this feeling of theirs could be called "belief." The enthusiasm of their feeling was merely camouflage for a total lack of precision and true obligation. "Feeling" in itself had nothing in common with "religion," for, after all, the original meaning of religion had been "precision" (as when, for example, a person does something *religiously*).

Those who scorned this "religiosity without religion" have been numerous, though they attacked it from many different points of view. There was, first of all, the criticism that came from the position of radically optimistic unbelief: from this viewpoint, "piousness without piety" or "religiosity without religion" seemed to prove the "fear of one's own courage." Other groups attacked from the opposite direction: they fought in the Kierkegaardian manner, desperately protecting their own despair as the only and last basis for faith. Seen from this tiny ledge, religiosity without religion appeared insincere and even purely "aesthetic." Akin to this was the position of Existentialist philosophy, which, having lifted the concept of "sincerity" from here and atheism from there, managed to stand on the ground in between —no wonder that it raised, at least for a time, the loudest echoes. But the last and most vulgar critics of "religiosity without religion" were certainly the orators of National Socialism. Accepting much of the rubbish of pseudo-belief that the 19th century had bequeathed to us ("everything is feeling"), they pumped it full of their terrifying commands, and thereby gave it the appearance of a complete and self-contained religion which combined feeling and obligation—a religion in armor.

KAFKA's contribution was this: he pushed into the foreground the original motive of true religion—*precision* or ritualism. He did this, however, without belonging to any group united by a common ritual. It was therefore a ghost that he conjured up, for ritual within the framework of agnosticism is unreal.

In magical or religious rituals, whenever precision is demanded, this demand always implies that the performer of the ritual—the owner of the "monopoly of knowledge"—should know the aims and also the dangers that surround each act. More important still, he must know the penalties attached to failure or omission. Kafka was in a very different situation. When it came to knowing what *should* be done, he had less knowledge than the generations that immediately preceded him. For them, at least, bourgeois morality had been a matter that was understood and could be taken for granted. If there was one thing that Kafka knew, it was that he knew no longer what ought to be done—that is, which among all the many obligations he felt were truly binding. It was the muse of the agnostic that inflamed his prose.

His categorical imperative, or at least that of his characters, can be reduced to this: *Fulfill in the most scrupulous manner the duties unknown to you.*

Obviously this scrupulousness or abstract ritualism, as contrasted to true ritual, is no less vague than mere "religiosity." But the vagueness is of a different character. Where 19th-century religiosity had been a free-floating emotion that renounced all binding force or obligation, Kafka creates a free-floating semblance of something binding, but without anything to which one is bound —an imperative without content, the mere mood of an imperative, a general ritualism without definite rituals. Religiosity without religion still allowed enthusiasm, but Kafka's

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abstract ritualism permits only despair and self-humiliation.

If one asks where such a blending of agnosticism with scrupulousness and ritualism is most clearly found, where Kafka's "categorical imperative" is accepted as most valid, the answer leaps to mind: under the terror of fascism, where the most scrupulous fulfillment of commands is required, though no one actually knows what he is supposed to do in any special case, or why he is obliged to do this or that. From this point of view, the strength of the Kafka cult in France turns out to be a highly suspicious symptom: may it not represent an indirect or concealed affirmation of that ghastly condition in which man, though not deemed worthy to know why he acts, is yet forced to act with the utmost precision? The popularity of Kafka may mean that the fascist terror, instead of being soberly remembered, is now being disguised in the colors of poetry, and thus becomes somehow an object of pleasure.

Now the word "precision" has a double connotation: on the one hand, the ways of the dangerous world (the precision and completeness of a totalitarian state); on the other hand, the means of escaping those dangers. "Precision" is understood, so to speak, as a homeopathic measure: one gains immunity from the poison by swallowing some of it. Thus the enthusiasm with which—against their own interests—millions of Europeans threw themselves into the fascist machine seems to have been motivated in large part by the fact that the unequivocal operation of command and obedience within the framework of the machine could produce for the victim a sort of ritual protection against the machine itself.

One has only to remember Kafka's own story "The Penal Colony" to summon up all the appropriate associations. Here, *par excellence*, is the uncomprehending yet comprehensive "machine" into which modern man has so often willingly hurled himself.

On the one hand, precision is an attribute of the "process," the trials man has to suffer at the hands of the authorities, the proceedings instituted by the world against man—in short, a term for the existing operations of the predominant world. But, besides this, it is a description of the attitude that Kafka *demands* of men and of himself, and it can hardly be denied that this view is something very close to "conformism."

As I pointed out above, it is Kafka's dissatisfaction with mere "religiosity" that made him invoke the categories of precision and scrupulousness. Kafka's ritualism amounts to an apotheosis of ritualism-in-general, an apotheosis of the mere experience of the binding power of ritual. Since it is not a definite ritual, but only the sense of precision that is actually at stake for him, he never gets beyond the boundaries of a merely psychological "religiosity," but even assimilates to that "religiosity" the one basic element of religion that had until his time resisted it—namely, its binding power.

Never does he find his way back to an actual religion. If he does go beyond previous attempts to psychologize and aestheticize religion, it is by aesthetically usurping not only religious content, as had been done for centuries, but also those ritualistic elements that once and for all separate the religious attitude from the aesthetic one. This is, to be sure, an extreme radicalism; but it is not the radicalism of a beginning. Kafka achieves the radical conclusion of that very process which he pretends to fight. He is one of his own foes, perhaps his greatest one.

But the effects of the last two hundred years of religious disintegration go far beyond those involved in this process of "psychologizing." Incomparably more serious was the effect of this disintegration upon the foundations of morality. So long as God's existence—even in its most diluted deistic form—was recognized as a matter of course, morality had its basis. But commandments and prohibitions are holy and binding only if they are issued by *someone*. Once the source of commands is forfeited, their justification is also lost. Morality is unable to justify its own existence. Why this deed "ought" to be done (as "good") and the other avoided (as "evil")—why, in fact, there

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"ought" to be such a thing as an "ought," a morality—becomes altogether incomprehensible to the unbeliever—and would rightly become so at the very first blow of unbelief, if men were consistent.

It would have been almost miraculous if in the course of the last century this paradox of the "call without the caller" or the "voice without a mouth" had no consequences. Half-way solutions had been tried. Usually, however, the voice, though deprived of a mouth, managed to keep its validity unimpaired. Even where a particular moral system was exposed as the deification of a concrete group-interest, the naive moral claim of the debunking party to a just—and therefore "good"—world, and the concept of a holy and binding obligation went unquestioned. Marxism, for example, never formulated theoretically the motives and justification of its own moral pathos; not even indirectly did its spokesmen discuss the question of the grounds of moral sanctions in any fashion that went farther than what had been familiar to pre-Marxian ethics. A political theory can hardly question its own moral justification.

If we leave aside the Russian nihilists, the inconsistency of the "voice without the mouth" became transparent and outspoken in the writings of two men: Nietzsche and Kafka. As a matter of fact, Nietzsche was, despite the scope of the naturalistic movement of his days, the sole example among his contemporaries of one who, by subjecting Christian morals to a fundamental criticism, intended to bring into question the legitimacy of morality in general. Two of his phrases—"God is dead" and "beyond good and evil"—are two variants of one theme.

KAFKA'S entire work can be understood in the light of this thesis: God is dead. In his forty-seventh "Meditation," Kafka writes of couriers galloping through the world and calling out messages that have lost their sense (for there are no "kings" left). "They would gladly put an end to their wretched lives, but they dare not because of their oath of service." Couriers of non-existent kings, bondsmen to the non-existent, they go forward in life on the strength of their oath. What is this but a literal description of what had actually been the hidden practice of the 19th and the opening of the 20th centuries: adherence to an oath by those who had ceased to believe in the existence of the one in whose name the oath had been sworn?

It would be impossible to present the situation more boldly and cruelly than Kafka does here: all that obscured this moral practice is dispersed; the ambiguity is exposed—at least in the realm of literature—as the paradox it really is. Thus far Kafka is right. But only thus far. For his purpose in formulating this paradox remains questionable. Certainly he does not seek to abrogate the "oath," to eliminate the paradox by exposing it, as Nietzsche had done. Far more likely is it that he wishes to bind us (and himself) more strongly in the spiderweb of the paradox itself—perhaps even *because* it is a paradox.

Even more: the tone of his anti-religious paradox is religious; it is infected by the very thing it denies. In a way, Kafka attempts to make religious capital out of the "still-kept oath," out of the fact that "God is dead."

In "The Imperial Message," a work closely akin to the forty-seventh "Meditation," Kafka writes, in words obviously influenced by Kierkegaard, that the dying king "has issued a message addressed to your Self" (*dich, dem Einzelnen*); yet the message never arrives, for the suite of apartments, the immense space that stretches between him and us, is too long. To this point the anti-religious theme seems to carry the day: the emperor is dead, and the immensity of the world, the sheer intervening space which is greater than the power of the Divine message, prevents it from reaching us. But for Kafka this immense distance is not just a "negation of religion"; it is, rather, a negative religious category like "Sin," "Evil," or "Devil" to the traditional believers. Time and again we see him tempted, even striving, to translate his desperation into something positive. And it is true that hardly

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anything submits itself to an easier transformation, logically as well as emotionally, than the category of "distance." Infinite distance takes on the collateral meaning of "inaccessibility"; and this inaccessibility (which connotes both: we cannot reach him, and he cannot reach us) again and again becomes God's "transcendence," one of the traditional *positive* attributes of God. In short: Kafka makes use of God's "inaccessibility" as if it were in fact a proof of his existence.

Yet the continuous shuttling from positive to negative and from negative to positive keeps him from making a final statement, and it is this very suspension of unequivocal statement, this floating "maybe—maybe not," which forces his reflections to become works of art. Had he ever found the way out, he would have been "only" the believer or the sage that some of his critics have tried to make him. But his doubts and despair never leave him; not knowing what he means, he does not "say what he means," and thus he remains in the "neutral" dimension of art. But in calling Kafka "neutral," I do not mean that he retired into an ivory tower; it would be closer to the truth to say that he was locked into one. The prayer of one who prays in doubt becomes a poem.

WHOEVER wishes to understand Kafka must list the many worlds from which he believed himself to be excluded, to which he did not belong—or, in moral terms, the many obligations and authorities he thought he shirked by being an outsider. Of course, for Kafka the various "authorities" ultimately become one authority—although we must not expect this one authority to be consistent with itself. And the only force that made these various authorities one was the fact that they are all correlates of Kafka's own total impotence and lack of authority. The bewildering opalescence of this one "authority" dissolves in Kafka's prose the contours of "God" and "World"—and this opalescence is not reducible by any interpretive manipulation.

At the same time, Kafka does not hesitate to raise before his "authority" certain of the most distinct traditional questions of theology. Of these, the most important is the question of theodicy—the problem of the existence of evil in a divinely created world. Granted God's goodness; granted also the reality of evil—how can we reconcile these two contradictory facts? And, as a counterpart to this, there is the conventional argument of atheism: Granted the reality of evil, is it compatible with the reality of God? Answer: no. Kafka's question, in formula, would run as follows: Granted the reality of evil, what concept should we have of the powers that create, permit, administer, and even enjoy this evil? Answer: There are evil powers, even an evil God.

Thus Kafka restores the Marcionist heresy, the theology in which the creator becomes an evil demiurge. (The correspondence is all the more striking since, in Marcion's theology, God the creator, in contrast to God the dispenser of love, is identified with the Old Testament's God of "Law"—of authority. For Marcion, as for Kafka, "Law" and "Evil" coincide.) The case of Kafka is the sole modern instance of such a view. In modern times, either the old argument of theodicy has been accepted and men have laid all faults on man himself, or, indignant with the injustice of the world, they have denied the idea of God altogether by denying the idea of a good God.

Yet the Christian solution of the problem, which incriminates man, plays just as important a role in Kafka's works as the Marcionist heresy. The villagers of *The Castle* believe either that whatever comes from the supreme authority can't be other than good (though this "good" may make people unhappy, and the supreme authority may take the form of a sleepy and indecent fellow, too lazy to speak), or that the word "good" by definition designates the requests or commands that issue from the supreme authority. "This is Klamm's decision," says the hostess in *The Castle*, "thus correct." It is hardly necessary to stress again the fact that this terrible *thus*, this identification of "power"

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and "morality," reminds one of the conformist experience under Hitler, and that it appeals to all those who are willing to "fall in line."

But the kind of conformism that Kafka describes is in a way even more abominable than what we have seen in the last fifteen years. A foreigner, K., has the chance to see through the depravity of the officials, who, after all, are not his own. Thus, when he identifies might with right, he cannot do it with the naive lack of suspicion of the natives of the village. Rather, he recognizes the power for what it is, though at the same time he is aware of its depravity. But since recognition implies the *legitimacy* of the recognized authority, Kafka acknowledges the evil God as the legitimate one, repeatedly defining the supreme authority as not subject to the law. "Our laws," he says (in "The Problem of Our Laws") "are not generally known; they are kept secret by the small group of nobles who rule us. . . Moreover, *the nobles . . . themselves stand above the laws. . . .*" (My emphasis.) He thus translates "immoral" into "extra-moral," and, in turn, "extra-moral" into "supra-moral."

Yet even here we have not reached the culmination of Kafka's moral theology. Since —so Kafka argues—the laws are not binding for the "nobles," it might well be that they do not exist at all. "Perhaps the laws have no reality whatsoever. . . ." And he means by this: it is possible that the laws have their sole reality in the act of obedience, their sole repository in the one who obeys—though, on the other hand, the one who obeys may not be deemed worthy to "know" the laws.

Now this horrifying picture undoubtedly presents an accurate description of legalistic automatism as it functions in the everyday world. But no one would maintain that Kafka confined himself to describing the bare conditions: the powerful moralistic effect of his writing would in that case be utterly incomprehensible. He does not simply record the paradoxical conditions of existence; he celebrates them with an unquenchable delight in despair. It is the paradoxy of a kind of supra-Abraham who doubts even whether God has remembered his own command to sacrifice Isaac. And this Abraham obeys, driven partly by despair, partly by pride, because his obedience has now become the sole abode of morality. If we were freely to translate his thoughts, they would read: "If I lose my son, it will serve the Lord right; why didn't he inform me about the nullification of his command?"

But the process of "falling in line" never reaches a goal—it cannot. For Kafka, "being" means "arriving," but it is an unceasing striving for arrival that never culminates in an actual arrival. "Falling in line" ultimately amounts to a never-ending oscillation. Time after time, his never quite final act of "recognition" transforms itself into a kind of argument or litigation until it changes again to self-incrimination. "I don't deserve anything better," Kafka's conscience seems to be saying. "If I didn't stand outside, I would not see the evil authority as evil, but would naively accept as 'good' whatever flows from its hands." But since Kafka regards his being an "outsider" as his "guilt," he concludes with a "mea culpa."

At the conclusion of *The Trial,* Kafka's hero exclaims: "How could a man possibly be guilty? Since we are all human beings, one like the other. . . ." Which proves that he understands his guilt no more clearly than we do. But this eminently reasonable exclamation provokes the terrible echo: "Right. But that's the way guilty people talk." Both of these sentences are Kafka's, and he gives his final consent to neither. Doubt is his very element, and in literature doubt takes the form of the dialogical or dialectical novel.

An interesting parallel suggests itself here between Kafka's attitude and the one classically formulated in the Book of Job, which, as we know, preoccupied Kafka throughout his life. Kafka is Job's true descendant when he refuses to acknowledge immediately as "good" whatever comes from the supreme authority; when he dares to argue; when he strikes his bargain by making a sacrifice of intellect and admits that his arguing itself

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puts him automatically in the wrong. Just as Job's resistance collapses when he realizes that God has created the crocodile and the hippopotamus, while he has created nothing, Kafka, or at least his protagonist Joseph K., recognizes that his own impotence deprives him of the right to call all rights in general into question. Nevertheless, the gap that separates Kafka from Job is immense—and, in moral terms, to Kafka's disadvantage. For Kafka's supreme authority is no longer God, but the world, and therefore his submission can scarcely be regarded as anything but humiliating.

THE redemption for which Kafka longs is not redemption from the world, but from his "not being in the world," from his state of exclusion from it. In this worldliness, he has much in common with those libertarian movements whose goal is not the beyond, but the installation of the "beyond" in this world. (As a matter of fact, Kafka felt close to socialist doctrines for a time, though his works show little evidence of this.) But unlike all libertarian movements, whether of the 18th or 19th centuries, which intended to establish—to "make"—their "paradises" here on earth, Kafka wants to set foot in his paradise, to "enter it," as he puts it—a highly questionable way of expressing his wish, since it presupposes the actual existence of this paradise. Yet this ambiguous way of putting it is plausible enough if one remembers that for Kafka *any* world, whether good or evil, is a sort of paradise if only he may belong to it. "The expulsion from Paradise," says his sixty-fourth "Meditation"—"at least its essential element—is eternal." And if the expulsion is eternal—that is, the event itself, not the fact of being expelled—paradise must be an eternal condition too. The complete quotation substantiates this: "In its main part the expulsion from Paradise is eternal: True, the expulsion from Paradise is final . . . but the eternity of this occurrence (or, to express it in temporal terms: the never ceasing repetition of the event) implies the possibility not only of our staying definitely in Paradise, but of actually being there, no matter whether we are aware of it or not."

How ambiguous! On the one hand, Kafka seems to refer to the event of the expulsion in an "existential" way, since, according to him, it takes place not just once, but is taking place incessantly. Yet through this very existential exegesis the event of the expulsion loses its serious religious meaning. If the process is taking place incessantly, then we are constantly poised with one foot in Paradise and the other foot outside. Look around you. Maybe you *are* in Paradise right now. And whether you are or not depends on where you turn your eyes. It is unnecessary to advance one single step; right now you are standing on the boundary line.

So, after all, Kafka has nothing in common with those who wished to erect their Edens on this earth. Nothing was farther from his mind than the idea of overturning the old world or of forming a new one. If any action presented itself to him, it was not that of "forming" something, but of "reforming" himself; not that of "overturning" the status quo, but of "returning" to a state of bliss. But even this self-centered action was doomed to remain a vain wish, for he never did know with certainty which paradise he desired. Whether the world of Jewish folk-life, or the Zionist movement, or the world of the under-privileged, or simply *the* world, the world of the powerful, which always counted for him though it did not deign to count him. In this light, there is nothing mysterious about his calling the "expulsion" an "eternal condition," for there was no definite paradise about which he had made up his mind—like Buridan's ass, who died of starvation between two bales of hay. He had nothing left but his vague, though tormenting, hunger for redemption—once more, as in the case of his ritualism, something purely psychological, and once more a paralyzing condition.

Nor did his frozen striving for redemption have much in common with the Jewish religion. The paradoxical aspect of Jewish Messianism, which no sooner recognizes the

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pretenders to the role of Messiah than it rejects them, has no resemblance whatever to Kafka's agnosticism. The basic ideas of the Jewish religion designate sharply defined obligations and limitations: whoever belongs to God, with whom Abraham has made his contract, belongs to the people also; and the original henotheistic element of Judaism, which made God and the Jewish people allies against rival gods, has never been lost completely in the monotheistic stage of the religion. Kafka cannot be conceived as continuing either the Jewish religion or aspects of its theology. But it is true—and here his "Judaism" plays an essential part—that the social fact of his being a Jew, his standing outside, was one of the things that made him "guilty" and in need of redemption. He looks at his being a Jew with Christian eyes; he is not a Jewish theologian, but rather a Christianizing theologian who speculates on the Jewish situation.

IF THERE is anything at all in Kafka's theology that may be called "Jewish," perhaps it is the fact that "nature" does not exist in his world. It is true that Kafka's animals are more than Aesopian human beings disguised as mice, dogs, or monkeys; each species is rendered in its own, animal terms. Yet they are still not "nature": each is a "rational animal," ultimately living only in reflections; while, according to the Greek and Christian tradition, "nature" is primarily existence without words. In Genesis "nature" does not exist either, since it is for man that the universe was created.

One wonders, however, whether the absence of nature in Kafka's world has actually anything to do with its Jewish character; he is not the only one of his generation to "leave out" nature. In Heidegger's philosophy, for example, no trace of nature is to be found; since Heidegger is pitted against naturalism, though fighting it with the atheistic weapons inherited from his enemy, there is neither God nor Nature but only the "world" in which human beings are thrown, the so-called "*Zeug*." Indeed Heidegger and Kafka represent a social and historical group equally removed from both the churchgoer and the materialistic revolutionary: they are both trying to abolish simultaneously the provinces of nature and of the supra-natural. Seen from this perspective, both belong to a new type.

Moreover, the absence of nature in Kafka's world can be laid to its institutionalization. In a totally industrialized world, nature vanishes and "raw material" takes its place. In Kafka, of course, the totalitarianism is purely bureaucratic—it is a world of offices, not factories—but here, too, no area exists to accommodate that "unused left-over" which we used to admire and enjoy in nature. In a way, Kafka's exclusion of nature is a true description of our present urbanizing, industrializing world, which occupies everything in order to use it and liquidates all that is unprofitable—even man himself.

Indeed, few statements can be advanced about Kafka with more certainty than the statement that his religiosity has no direct connection with the Jewish religion. Wherever he dealt with the Jewish question, he either formulated the position of the Jew in the world or that of the de-Judaized Jew confronting the "Jewish Jew."

In his story "The Giant Mole," Kafka analyzes the relation between the cultured Jew, the *Bildungsjude* whose affiliation to Judaism has become questionable, and the Orthodox Jew. A village teacher has seen a huge mole about which he has written with no thought of literary pretension: he simply wishes to demonstrate the *existence* of the mole. The metaphorical meaning of the mole embraces both the Jewish God, hidden in obscurity, and the "underground-reality" of the Jewish people, living, so to speak, beneath the surface of history; Kafka combines these two meanings in one image, for, in the eyes of the cultured Jews, these two facts got lost simultaneously: they form one loss.

Although the village teacher is ignored by the academic scholars, an educated Jew—the narrator of the story (evidently Kafka himself)—condescendingly espouses the teacher's cause and writes an apologia for him. He does this, however, not to confirm

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the reality of the mole (in which he may vaguely believe), but rather to prove the teacher's "good intentions." He does this as a Western Jew might publish a fancy edition of the Talmud—patronizingly, even admiringly, yet without meaning or believing a single word. No wonder that the teacher—who, after all, has seen the mole—suspects the apologist of robbing him of his good reputation and his claim to priority. To him, the vindication of his honor must look like an offense, for he does not think that either his person or his honor are in need of such apologies; indeed, in his view, this offense is all the more insolent because the alleged "apologist" did not even deem it necessary to communicate with him before publishing his "rehabilitation." In fact, only after publishing his own book has the apologist read the teacher's report. That is, only after vaguely protesting that he was Jewish did Kafka begin the actual study of Judaism—a striking description of a typical occurrence.

Yet teacher and apologist are judged and treated alike, however terribly they may misconstrue each other's intentions. The *Agronomical Journal*—apparently the voice of provincialism—goes so far as to pretend that both writings come from the same pen, that the apologist's name can be nothing but the teacher's pseudonym. In other words, to the world as a whole—to the non-Jewish mass—the Jews lose all their internal differences and take on the undifferentiated appearance of *"the Jew."* Finally, however, the teacher and his apologist meet; the protector needs the teacher, while the teacher does not need his protection; fearful of having harmed the teacher, the protector withdraws all copies of his highbrow thesis—precisely as Kafka did when he asked Max Brod to destroy his writings. In short, he revokes and cancels the legitimacy of his own attitude and his own activity. But, though he announces his "resignation," he does not leave the teacher's room—which, translated from the language of metaphor, means that he renounces his well-meant and refined Jewish talk, keeps his mouth shut, is ashamed of himself, and somehow continues to be a Jew.

This story is of the utmost importance, not only because it expresses the distance between Kafka and the Jewish religion, but even more because it helps to explain Kafka's request that his works be destroyed after his death. For the story tells us something about the relation that exists today between culture and its inherited content—that content which does not belong to it, since it is a product not of culture but of religion. Seen thus, the story expresses the bad conscience of the "cultured man" before the *"Ur-text,"* the "original" text, in which he no longer believes, but which yet strikes him as "authentic" when compared to his own purely aesthetic and derived relation to it. It is the last paradoxical stage of belief that Kafka describes (or rather advocates) here: a belief not in dogmatic content but in belief itself; or, to put it negatively, scepticism as to the legitimacy of scepticism. In Kafka's work "culture" has driven its paradoxy to a point where its own evil consciousness again becomes a fable, and thus again a pure "cultural good." This paradox is still consistent with itself, but it frightens the moralist, and it frightened Kafka more. No wonder he doubted the value of his works.

It is impossible to accept that version which holds that Kafka wanted his works destroyed because he was not fully satisfied with their literary qualities. On the contrary, he was amazed at the perfection of his prose whenever he wrote. Saulus did not become Paulus on account of the artistic defects of Judaism. Kafka doubted his work because, ultimately, its perfection was *only* an aesthetic one.

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IN THE BEGINNING WAS THE WORD

A Story

HAMLEN HUNT

THIS summer, they had set out on exploration which was quite daring for native New Yorkers and for people born in Brooklyn. They hardly go anywhere, except around, and nearby, and where they know people. In peacetime, in the lower brackets, they go to certain places along the Jersey shore which shall be nameless, like Asbury Park. Or they go to the New York mountains, or into Connecticut, or to Cape Cod. Upper brackets, New Hampshire, Vermont, Cape Cod, too, but Truro or the Wellfleets, not Provincetown any more, so much. Then of course there's Fire Island.

But they had a whole month's vacation this summer, and decided to do something different with it. They couldn't afford to go to Europe, or they would have done that. South America, no. But there was always Canada, and, talking around, they were torn between the Gaspé, where it was French, and Nova Scotia, where she had remote and elderly cousins who spent summers in a house built by a shipping great-grandfather.

She was not, but he was. But she was born in New York City, three generations of her family had lived in Manhattan, in traditional old apartment houses, first around St. Nicholas Avenue—that was in her grandparents' time, it was all right up there, then. Later, midtown. She herself was a child of Greenwich Village, the soft asphalt of memory under her roller skates, went to school on Horatio Street, grew up to go to revels at Webster Hall.

He came from Brooklyn, said the longest journey was the one over the bridge to Manhattan, so that you lived there, he meant. On that journey you lost a lot of things, including a way of talking, old acquaintances, memories. Then, if you were doing all right, you grew warm again toward certain aspects of Brooklyn, and had friends over there, but different ones, and you even thought you would like to live in a remodeled house along the Heights, so as to look over at New York.

THEY married after he got out of the army, and lived first in an apartment near Stuyvesant Square. It had tall, grand rooms, and odd small rooms, to study in. He taught, she worked for the Public Library, which she loved like a brother, because if you grow up poor in New York, you love all Andrew Carnegies, all kind librarians and Story Hour ladies. This apartment was up four long flights of vertiginous stairs, each one balanced differently from the flight below, and with a different droop, and shaky banisters. Your heart was in your mouth half the time, and if you forgot the bread or the artichokes, it was hell.

So they moved, but they had become New Yorkers who loved big, handsome rooms, and accepted irregularity of plumbing. They wanted drawing-rooms, French windows leading to a backyard that might become a garden later, and they were perfectly willing to have the icebox under the stove, and the bathroom out in the hall. I mention this to show they loved the look of where they lived. They were not austere, not too political, they liked beauty and pleasure and reminders of joy. He had brought home some

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HAMLEN HUNT has contributed to *McCall's, Woman's Home Companion, Story,* and a number of other magazines. She was awarded the Twentieth Century-Fox writing fellowship in 1944 and the short-story prize of the Bureau for Intercultural Education in 1947. Miss Hunt was born in New York City and attended Columbia University and Radcliffe. Her story "Tonight We Eat Leaning" was published in the April 1948 COMMENTARY.

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good engravings from Paris, they were framed on the vast, accepting walls. She knew painters, and bought paintings, as she said, on purpose.

Whenever they went anywhere, they liked to bring something back, to remind them. They hadn't been many places together yet, and they knew it got harder, with children. They had been married nearly four years, and were anxious for children, didn't want to put off having them any longer.

So, as a reward for her getting pregnant at a slightly awkward time—there is never a time for getting pregnant that suits everybody, you know that, it just can't be—they decided, she was only a month or two along, they would travel somewhere. Next summer Europe, baby and all, if he could get exchange teaching to do, or a fellowship, which looked very likely.

Afterward, she wondered if it was that which gave her a slightly queasy feeling about their summer, as though perpetually crossing the Bay of Fundy. Just a faint distaste and qualm. She had never been to Nova Scotia before, and then again, she had never been pregnant before. So it was hard to tell.

Anyway, they planned to drive to Canada along the New England coast, take the St. John-Digby ferry, and then come home via the Halifax-to-Boston boat, if they could get a reservation. Which they did. Ahead of time. And then, when they got to Halifax, their reservation had gone to somebody else. Or so the man said. Or something. They couldn't get their car aboard for two days, and that took endless standing around the dock, waiting for a cancellation. He wondered if he was being called persistent, the way *they* are, pushing, elbowing out of turn, not gentlemanly, really, but by then he was good and sore, and hardly cared what the man thought. He got a reservation, finally, and had an idea it was somebody else's turn to be annoyed. Maybe there was nothing personal about it, after all.

As early as Northern Maine, they began to get a feeling of the dangers of foreign travel. They bought chocolate bars wherever they came on them, and put their favorite reading books right on the seat beside them, in case they had to wait anywhere.

They did not like to be out of each other's sight. If he was going somewhere to see about tickets, she went with him, and if he was going to be long, she sat in the car and read. The same with him. Once she got her hair washed in a small hotel, because already the amenities of civilization were thinning out, and he sat right in the lobby, reading and waiting and listening to the jocund conversation of small-town travelers.

"How things going?"

The sharp answer seemed to be, "Straight ahead."

In Maine, there were a few nice old towns, with great, grand houses, bays and harbors, widows' walks to see them from, and cemeteries everywhere. The dead had the best of everything, hilltops, views, leisure. In life, not so.

Towns thinned out to farms that all seemed to belong to old people. They sat in their doorways, in the chill sunset.

"Maine would make a lovely old folks' home," she said. "You could be independent a long time. A little farm would keep you busy enough, a few chickens, an apple tree, neighbors—"

"You wouldn't like it," he said firmly. She was more apt than he to get a little sentimental, in summer, and think some day they must live in the country. For himself, he wanted to own something in the city, real stones, bricks, a piece of Manhattan or Brooklyn Heights, then you'd own something, then you'd be somewhere. And if you could do that, you could afford plenty of country and seashore, all you wanted, summers.

"I didn't mean that," she said, and felt prematurely old, because she suddenly remembered being pregnant, which was the start of generations to come, and she would be of a generation left behind, one of these days.

Often it was hours between towns, now, and when they crossed the border into Can-

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ada, they got long drinks of water, as though they were about to cross a desert.

In New Brunswick, the tea began to be good, and they had the first one of those meals they soon found to be inevitable—fried meat or fish, French-fried potatoes, pie, and tea. Wax beans the only vegetable, not counting potatoes, which apparently grew French-fried, and the rare, pale slice of tomato.

She exclaimed with pleasure, finally, over tomatoes.

"Love-apples," she said. "When I was little, we hardly got to eat tomatoes. They were dangerous, like bananas."

"We went in for healthy vegetables, vegetables," he said. "Except for the junk we ate outside the house. I *like* fried food."

They stayed overnight in St. John, red brick houses, three stories high, on steep streets that all ended in views of water. Across, in Digby, they began to drive through Nova Scotia.

"The Evangeline country," she read from a travel folder, while he drove through what she called five-story-high trees. After a while, they were made uneasy by the deserted vast expanses of forest, the roaring dark rivers that bared their stones. There was sky everywhere, vast, naked and blue, or else covered with slow-moving, repetitious clouds.

They stayed at bare cabins or boarding houses, and looked forward to the few days of visiting her comfortable cousins. A terrible loneliness began to envelop them. Nova Scotia was densely unpopulated. Villages were half a dozen mute houses, then mile after mile of woodland. There were all kinds of birds, bright finches and great, unwieldy crows, in quantity.

"As big as vultures," she said, mournfully. "I wish we'd get somewhere."

In her cousins' village, there was English civilization, the tiny, tidy social life of Cranford. People had each other to tea, elderly ladies wore white hats and white gloves, and declined a second sandwich, and spoke of pleasure. "With me, painting is merely an *avocation*," said the plump, redfaced lady. "Not a vocation." She laughed, and they looked at her water colors of hackmatack trees and small fishing boats.

The dozen or so families, like her cousins, were descendants of vanished mill owners and managers, describing themselves as gentlefolk. They told her local history, which was complex, and had to do partly with the American Revolution, when nearly half of Harvard College moved to Nova Scotia, loyalists, and so on.

There were others in the village, rural characters in thick-soled boots, women often wearing men's old tweed jackets, the children pale, thin, small, looking as though they lived on wax beans, French-fried potatoes, and tea.

Her cousins told her nobody poor ever had the doctor, but instead ate pills, and took colored infusions, and made herb teas for each other. Hearing some talk of sterilizing infants' bottles and so on, the old one who worked for her cousins said it was foolish, and she ought to know, hadn't she had twelve and raised six?

She began to feel queasy, and the landscape seemed darker and more menacing. She began almost to hate the great, encroaching evergreens, and the impervious sky. Although there were sudden vistas of slanting green fields, a bright blue inlet, brilliant sun on amber-colored water, a yoke of oxen, all together, in one place, and a miniature fishing village. It felt a hundred years ago, and she entertained dreads and humors.

"We haven't found anything really nice to take home, have we?" she said, and began to look at hooked rugs. She bought one or two, for presents, and bought wool to take home to knitters, and some lengths of good tweed, so they could have country jackets alike. He bought some flannel for a suit.

In almost the last day of their visit, her cousins took them to visit an impressive hunting lodge in the deep forest. Surrounded by darkness, the lodge was built on a steep bank of a river, there was a steady noise the water made. Their host said there

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was a bear in the vicinity, he knew by two signs, the bear's works on the path, and another place the bear had been sick on blueberries.

"The charms of nature," she thought.

She heard a story that made her feel slow and cold and far from all she held dear, except for Saul, who was there (they would die together in these woods, a stone would crush them, a river would drown them, a bear would embrace them).

Her host told the story, while she observed remainders of dead animals. Antlers. A cluster of wasps' nests. His gun rested on upturned deer hoves. Snakeskins.

A man had come there, many years ago, a peddler with a pack. Gradually he got a horse and wagon, then built the only store. Also he began to buy a little woodland. He was a solitary man, without family. His store had been burnt down five times. The last time he was nearly cleaned out, because his warehouse was full of new stock. He let the poor buy on credit, and nobody ever left the store without stealing something—it was a ritual. He knew that, and was pretty sure who set the fires, but he went on working all hours, and now owned miles of forest, which he just kept. Nobody could prevent that.

"An Armenian," her host explained, and she felt the strangest shock of relaxation. She knew why, and hated it more that he was only a poor Armenian trader, trying to emulate Bruce and his spider. "Try, try again, poor old Bruce Canatangian, or whatever your name is," she thought. "Anglo-Saxons love fair play." But it had come near.

On the last day, they drove to a nearby town, with the cousins, who wanted to see about some upholstery that had been in process all summer.

"He has some fine old furniture," they said, for she had still not found what she wanted to take home.

The town was of such ugliness as to be almost memorable, how *could* a town with a harbor, and trees, be so depressing? The cousins admired the residential section, but other streets were raw and frontierlike, and the courthouse was Grecian in front, with Doric columns, but drab shingled back and sides. The stores along the main street were named Voegler's, Wigglesworth's, Armand's, and at last they came to a two-story barn, full of old furniture.

The upholsterer who conferred with the cousins bought and sold antiques, did cabinet work, trucking, and a few other things. He was a fat, small-eyed beetle of a man in striped overalls. The reason he had good antiques was that he also helped out the undertaker, and so got into front parlors not usually open to him. He remembered what he saw in time of bereavement—English highboys, French chairs, fine china, crystal goblets. When the time came, he bought up.

She admired one sofa. It was small, carved with palmetto leaves along the rising curve of arm and back, beautiful red mahogany from the Bahamas, not yet upholstered, which was an advantage, if it would only fit in the back of the car. It was a hundred and fifty years old. The daughter of a family he knew, so did the cousins, had brought it in a year or two ago, to get it upholstered because she was going to be married. Before he got around to it, her man went into the asylum. There ever since. Hopeless case, they said.

"How terrible," said the cousins, in pity.

"Lucky to get out of it, the way I see it," he replied. "She'd have had him on her hands. Now she wants to sell the sofa."

"How much is it?" she asked.

"Two hundred dollars," he said.

It was a lot, but they wanted it. While they talked it over, and measured, and looked at other things, the upholsterer touched a French empire table, also mahogany. It was far more elegant than anything else there, polished by centuries, with brass, carried from long-ago Paris to be the one fine thing in the wilderness community.

"It is beautiful," he agreed. "Jew come in here the other day, offered me a hundred and fifty for it." He laughed. "Figured if the Jew offered me that, it was worth twice as much to me. Wouldn't sell."

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"I wonder if the sofa *will* fit in the car," she said, rather abruptly, and walked downstairs, as if to take more measurements. The stairs were uneven, and she clung to the rough wooden rail and longed for Stuyvesant Square.

Her cousin had introduced them by name, for, they always explained gently, business was not so commercial here as at home. The antiques man had seemed indifferent.

She could not know whether he had done it intentionally and told herself she cared less, and be damned to his sofa. But it seemed to her when she glanced back to see if Saul and the cousins were almost ready to leave, the fat little man stood smiling, glinting with the pleasure of the word he had used.

The town stood in Acadia, the land of Evangeline. This was the forest primeval.

SMALL PERFECT MANHATTAN

PETER VIERECK

UNABLE to breathe, I inhaled the classic Aegean.
Losing my northern shadow I sheared the noon
Of an almond grove. The tears of marble
Thanked me for laughter.

Shapes! And "Release, release" rustled the quarries;
"One touch will free the serenity locked in our stones."
But archipelagos of olives
Distracted me shorewards,

Where sails were ripening toward an African sleep.
This south wind was no friend of the wind of harps.
Not destiny but destination
Incited the grain-ships.

"Nevertheless be of cheer," said a jolly skipper;
"I sell sick goats that once were deft at flutes.
The lizard who now is proconsul of Carthage
Will bury you sweetly."

Then No to sweet Charon. Then home—then not to Sahara,
The elephants'-graveyard of classics—ascended the singing
Green I wove just the size of the brow of
Small perfect Manhattan.

PETER VIERECK was awarded the Pulitzer Prize for his volume of poetry *Terror and Decorum* in 1948. More recently, Mr. Viereck has published *Conservatism Revisited* (Scribners, 1949). His poem "Big Crash Out West" appeared in the August 1949 issue of COMMENTARY.

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FROM THE AMERICAN SCENE

REPORT FROM THE FARM

Back to the Land with Sunnybrae Mary VI

EARL RAAB

WE ARE in the "cow business"—permanently, we think—but the Fable of the Chicken and the Jew will not down. Most recently we have had this dramatized for us by an omniscient bartender in a coastal town, who has a way of dropping an eyelid when we talk about dairying. He simply won't be convinced. Against our weary professions, he talks slyly and inevitably about the vicissitudes of the poultry market. The Jew, according to the legend, is by nature and incontrovertible tradition a merchant—and if he finds himself in agriculture, then his fingers are still soiled by the ink of the chicken farmer's account books rather than the grit of the soil.

Many poultrymen do not manipulate the earth; they don't bother or haven't the facilities to raise their own feed. The productive image of the man with the hoe is replaced by the businessman speculating on the future price of meat as against the present price of grain. Not for the likes of them the ancient pattern of hardship farming, they are the "soft" ones, the "feather merchants." The infantryman's indictment of the headquarters clerk.

Factual refutation of the fable is futile and—as in the case of any fable—irrelevant. Nevertheless, for what little they are worth, available statistics indicate that about one out of every three American Jewish farmers is primarily a poultry man; one out of three is engaged in general farming (which may include poultry); and the remainder are chiefly dairy operators (one out of five) and truck farmers (one out of ten). There are Jewish grain farmers in the mid-West, fruit farmers in California, vegetable growers in the East, potato farmers in Maine, dairy farmers in almost every state, indistinguishable in the matter of productive sweat from any of the current crop of American farmers. But it would be pointless to deny the pointless fact that there is a higher percentage of poultrymen amongst Jewish farmers than there is in the common farm population. It would be even more foolish to deny that, as a genus, the American Jew turning farmer is quite apt to turn border-line farmer, in so far as he can economically afford it.

Farm life has traditionally revolved around two axes. The first is nature's silence; the second is nature's violence. The Jew in modern times has been big-city-bred, with noise his element, his friendly companion, often his only comfort. Not a definable noise, nor a conversational noise (and in this connection, the garrulity of the farmer has been monstrously underrated), but the constant, reassuring, indistinct gurgle of human activity. As for nature in the rough, city life is cushioned on a structure of intermediaries; the metropolite (and especially the middle-class metropolite) is protected on his every side. Even the unpredictable soil itself is separated from him by a carpet of concrete. He is softened by civilization, tender in the face of nature.

EARL RAAB, city-born and bred, is now a dairy-farmer in Maine, whence he writes this report. Mr. Raab was born in 1919 and was graduated from the City College in 1940. During the war, he served in the United States Air Force. His previous article, "In Promised Dixieland," appeared in the May 1948 COMMENTARY.

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This softness and tenderness is the stuff out of which the Great Slander against the American-Jewish farmer is compounded. But it is also the point at which the Great Slander deflates itself as soon as one looks not merely at the "Jewish farmer" but at the American farmer as a whole.

WITNESS the case of one "nice Jewish boy," raised in the city's cubicles, who last winter found himself alone on a farm in Maine for the first time. Came late November, and he awoke to a catastrophe of frozen pipes—and immediately remembered with fondness all the superintendents in his life. "Hey, Joe, will you come up from the basement and check our pipes?" But there was nothing in this basement but mice—and it wasn't practical to call ten miles for a plumber every time the pipes froze.

So he scalded the pipes, and along with them, his hands. Then off to the barn, to milk the cows. The gasoline engine that ran the milking machine wouldn't even sputter. It still wouldn't sputter after he'd unscrewed the spark plug, glared at it, and screwed it back. The only thing he'd learned at the College of the City of New York about combustion engines was that the nearest mechanic could be found in the yellow pages of the telephone book. But it wasn't as easy as that in rural Maine early on a winter's morn. He fiddled and cranked and then he milked by hand.

Promptly a fine purebred Ayrshire cow, splendidly named Sunnybrae Mary VI, dumped him in the gutter with a short dispassionate jab. His instinctive metropolitan reactions were to be outraged, to sue, to demand proper, state-legislated safety devices, to write a letter to the proper authorities. But Sunnybrae Mary VI couldn't read.

As he milked, he measured the rest of the day. There was garbage to be removed—and no Sanitation Department. There were places to go, vehicles to be started—and no Transit Company to complain to if buses were late. There was an animal to be buried, a roof to be fixed, a tree to be felled, and to the raw difficulties these projects presented he could oppose only his own raw strength, a few simple hand tools, and desperation.

These were black trivia, but they laid bare in pattern the primitive relationship that has traditionally obtained between the farmer and the natural forces with which he lived and worked. In the spring the land would have to be ripped violently from its place. At harvest times, the rains would have to be outwitted, the droughts outlasted, the frosts outraced. Without protection, without mediation, the farmer has had to stand barehanded against the whimsical violence of the primal furies.

SLANDER-WISE, a certain nervous shyness in the face of nature probably does apply to Jews—but then it applies equally to the urban population as a whole, and, of course, the Jewish population is eminently urban. But where the Great Slander breaks down most seriously is at the other end—in an idealized and false conception of the traditional farmer against whom the Jew (the urbanite) is measured and found wanting. The farmer, it is by now obvious, was tough only by necessity.

The farmer has always been a victim of cash poverty. With the golden tide of the recent boom years, farmers' poverty-encrusted inhibitions popped all over the country. As one man they looked toward one goal: push-button farming, secure from the ravages of nature, fitted out with all the gadgets of a specialized industrial economy. Artificial hay-driers are no longer a rarity (and let it rain!); electric motors have replaced cantankerous gasoline engines; barns are cleaned with a flick of a switch; power loaders, large tractors, field choppers, corn pickers, self-propelled grain combines in increasing numbers shift the odds more favorably to the farmer in his struggle for comfort and safety. Rural homes have blossomed out with central heating systems, modern plumbing (complete with defrosting cable), electric stoves, and washing machines. The callouses are softening on the hands of the farm wives. The farmer (who can afford it) is building his own intermediary structure between nature and himself.

The vaunted "creative" urge of the husbandman to wrestle a meager life out of the soil with his bare hands turns out to have been only a myth, an imposition of poverty. Turned on its head and applied in negation to a stylized figure of the Jewish farmer—it still remains a myth. There are handfuls of people, ideologically devoted to the Basic Life, gathered in ascetic subsistence settle-

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ments throughout the country, but they are largely excommunicated from the farming community. There are others who, for a variety of personal reasons, attempt to maintain a compromise position between the pleasures of agrarianism and those of civilization. But in the main, the low-down drive of new and generations-old farmers alike, is the virtual elimination of that bodily tussle with the elements which has always been supposed to constitute the traditional character of farming as a vocation.

TODAY—the product of a counter-movement to the farm during the period of an overwhelming country-to-city population tide—there are about a hundred thousand Jews on American farms, working over a million acres worth over one hundred and fifty million dollars. As a movement, it can hardly be called socially significant, nor does it promise to be.

Attempts to settle large numbers of Jews on the land pre-date the Civil War, and coincide in the 19th century with peaks of immigration from Eastern Europe. Mass agricultural colonization has rarely been successful. The Sholom Collective of Ulster County, founded in 1837, was forced to support itself partially in trade and manufacture. In the 1880's colonies were set up in Louisiana, the Dakotas, Oregon, Colorado, Kansas, and New Jersey, but they were all short-lived, except for the settlement in New Jersey, which is considered the cradle of the Jewish farm movement.

But, by and large, the Jewish rural current is only fifty years old. It has received much of its impetus from groups who felt that it would be healthier in this New World for the Jews to distribute themselves "in sounder proportions" than heretofore. This is an old sentiment often held by sincere theorists and as often propounded by confirmed city dwellers. If the Jews spread themselves more thinly over the face of the national economy, so the theory went, they would be generally less conspicuous. In 1894 Count Leo Tolstoy told Rabbi Joseph Krauskopf, the outstanding figure in the Jewish agricultural movement at its inception: "Lead the tens of thousands of people of your cities to your idle fertile lands and you will bless not only them, but also your country, and spread a good name for your people throughout the land, for all the world honors and protects the bread producer and is eager to welcome him."

Alas for such hopes, the mere presence of a hundred thousand Jews on American farms, even if they were to plow furrows with their finger nails, does not really penetrate to the various social psychoses catalogued as "anti-Semitism." Perhaps a more substantial "correction" of city-farm population imbalance might have some effect, but as an eventuality that is completely improbable. American farms today are actually overstaffed, and there is no opportunity for a mass rural migration. American Jewry, like American non-Jewry, continues to move inexorably toward its white-collar destiny.

HERE in rural Northern New England, anti-Semitism is not a passion—but its pungent aroma lingers in the little corners. New England is, after all, an eminent part of the Anglo-Saxon world, and the Jew is the Anglo-Saxon symbol for the moneychanger. Roget's *Thesaurus* lists five references for "Jew": "cunning," "lender," "rich," "extortioner," and finally, "heretic." A literature of jokes would crumble without that symbol, a whole colorful section of rural catch-phraseology would be lost ("A Jewish mortgage"—"Caught between the Jews and the Hebrews . . ."). A fertilizer salesman told me recently that such and such a company had once sold a good product, but the company had been taken over by a Jew. He didn't bother to furnish the denouement. It was clear. Thenceforth the company would be more interested in making money than a fine fertilizer. A farmer pointed to a cow in his barn and twanged: "That's a Goldstein cow" (a Holstein cow, bought from a Jewish cattle dealer). Farmers are wary enough of cattle dealers, merchants. They are just that much more wary of a Jewish cattle dealer, a Jewish merchant.

But examples of discourtesy or distrust toward a Jewish farmer are rare. An investigation conducted by the Jewish Agricultural Society indicated that only one farmer of those interviewed reported anything but amicable relations with neighbors. The Jewish farmer is usually accepted on his merits where the Jewish salesman or merchant is given whatever happens to be the customary treatment in the area. In converse, no matter how solidly a farmer accepts his Jewish

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neighbor, his attitudes toward the city Jew remain essentially what they were.

So, the effect of land settlement, as far as anti-Semitism is concerned, is normally operative only for the individual Jews involved. This has been generally characteristic of whatever benefits may have been expected to accrue from "Jewish farming." It has effectively broken the myth of Jewish money-changing only for the individual Jews involved. It has effectively relieved metropolitan congestion only for the individual Jews involved.

WHAT then does it mean for a Jew, becoming a farmer?

The Jewish Agricultural Society found in a cross-section survey that sixty-one per cent of its allied farmers came to the land primarily because they were weary of city life and sought the active surcease of the country. Lesser reasons included the desire to improve financially or the demands of health. Jews do not become farmers to "normalize" their occupational structure or to fulfill any of the pet schemes of Jewish theorists. (The *halutzim*, preparing for life on the collective settlements of Israel, are an insignificant number.) Their motivations distinguish the Jews not at all from the non-Jews who turn farmers. In the matter of intimate objective, there is no more significance to the term "Jewish farmer" than there is to the term "Jewish mechanic."

The fact that Jewish farmers do exist, however, has a certain distinction. It cannot materially alter the course of historical anti-Semitism, nor in America will it ever seriously affect the economic stability of the Jews as a group, one way or another. But for those who, for their own reasons, yearn for the land, it provides a precedent and an assurance. For the Jews, as a category, return to the soil with a special nuance of hesitation, and need a special kind of orientation. As individuals, the Jews are no more strangers to agriculture than other urban Americans. But as a group, through the centuries of modern history, they have been artificially urbanized, constrained from the soil. The gradual release of this inhibition has manifested itself in America, by the fact of one hundred thousand Jews settling on the farms of the country while the great population surge was headed in the opposite direction. And these settlers were not primarily immigrant farmers. Eighty-six per cent of the Jews who settled on farms up to the war were drawn from non-agricultural pursuits (twenty-eight per cent from the needle and fur trades alone).

But in so far as it is necessary to *do* something, organizationally, about Jewish land settlement, the only cogent approach is through those *individuals* who are personally weary of the impersonal city, or others who for special reasons feel the urgency of the farm call. The Jewish Agricultural Society, which spearheads the farm movement in this country, has always strongly believed that an artificially stimulated farming class meant a weak farming class. They have consequently refrained from mass propaganda, and have instead concentrated on assisting Jews who have already made their decision, the aspirant Jewish farmers who do face, as a group, special difficulties.

FUNDS from government lending agencies, with which most young farmers are making their start, are not always easy to obtain for the city-bred Jew who has no agricultural background or spectacular collateral to support his request. The JAS, set up on Baron de Hirsch funds, assists on the basis of less tangible assets and qualifications, wherever a venture seems potentially fruitful and as far as Society funds will allow. As a matter of fact, the Society's experience in agricultural finance led to its collaboration in drafting the first federal farm loan act, and its executive head became the first president of the Federal Land Bank having jurisdiction over New England, New York, and New Jersey. The critical Land Bank Commissioner Loan instituted by the New Deal was the type of loan the JAS had been making for thirty years.

But money is just the prime requisite. There follows a slippery course for the novice class. Every now and then in the Yiddish newspapers a piece of worthless farm land is advertised in beguiling terms, and money fraudulently extracted from some hopeful city dweller. But there are fewer victims of fraud than of ignorance. Exhausted soil, insufficient water supply, inadequate outbuilding facilities, outrageous price, any one of a hundred factors can doom a farming enterprise, which normally teeters on a precarious

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enough balance for the first years. The JAS has field agents who examine prospective farms for their pitfalls.

There is also, for those with no country contacts, the serious problem of approaching a farm with enough practical knowledge to make it run. Although the acquisition of farm know-how is not a severe strain on the reflective faculties, without tutorship it can be a comic-opera muddle. When we took over our first crop farm, we were versed in theories of agronomy, knew exactly how ladino clover was to be fertilized, how hay must be dried to best preserve its nutrient qualities, how the weight of a hay stack could be mathematically estimated, what the latest word was in legume research. But at the time, we were faced with the immediate problem of plowing up a farm full of weedy looking growth in order to seed down some late forage in the manner prescribed by the latest Department of Agriculture Bulletins. The hay season was close upon us, the winter was going to be long, and we were desperate. One blessed day a neighbor wondered mildly when we were going to cut our hay. Hay! My God, What Hay? We asked idly in what order the former owner had been accustomed to cut what fields, and in this rather unscientific manner, found out where our hay fields lay. This chance conversation resulted in about $750 worth of hay, which we were otherwise prepared to plow up as noxious weed.

Of course, all cases of ignorance are not that extreme, nor that critical. There's always a helping hand somewhere, and pride goeth before a farm, as we discovered when we tried to harness our first team of horses from a Sears Roebuck catalog picture. But because of the hazards involved, the JAS, in addition to conducting a formal school, maintains a farm settlement service, really the first specialized farm employment agency in the country, in order to give prospective farmers some earthy training.

For the established community, the JAS provides advisory and purchasing services, and publishes a farm newspaper in Yiddish and English, one of the first farm papers in America to be published in a foreign language.

Jewish farm leaders are interested in establishing a community of farmers wherever possible, so that an organized Jewish life may be sustained. Throughout New York there are synagogues and Jewish centers in every sizable farm community. In Colchester, Connecticut, where Jewish farm settlement dates back to 1890, there were before the war one hundred Jewish families, out of a total population of twenty-four hundred. But still, at the present time, less than half of the Jewish farm children receive some form of religious instruction—perhaps a little below the city average.

There is indication that, for some time to come, a percentile or two of Jews will continue their abandonment of the dingy or well-upholstered ghettos of the city. (And more than one-third of their children over eighteen are remaining on the farms to maintain a permanent community.) For good and personal reasons, they will choose the ancestral role, even if for many of them it means weathering a strange and unaccustomed rudeness on the part of nature. Those who embrace the rural mode for its own sake, will be reconciled with even the rudeness. But should the industrial revolution on the farm fulfill its imperative, as all industrial revolutions have a way of doing, not only will the rudeness be overwhelmed, but eventually the small individual farmer as well, and most rustic by-patterns of life.

Then, I suppose, there'll always be fur-trapping in the North woods.

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CEDARS OF LEBANON

THE DEATH OF TAMMUZ

SAUL TSCHERNICHOWSKY

SAUL TSCHERNICHOWSKY was born in 1875 in the Russian Crimea, a birthplace that set him apart from most Hebrew writers of his generation, who grew up in the Orthodox atmosphere of the towns and larger cities of the Pale. Coming onto the literary scene at the same time as Bialik, Tschernichowsky sounded a literary counterpoint. Whereas Bialik gave expression to the sufferings of a generation, Tschernichowsky was the poet of an almost pagan love of life. A fuller discussion of his life and work can be found in an article by Eisig Silberschlag, "Tschernichowsky: Poet of Myths," in the January 1946 COMMENTARY. Tschernichowsky died in 1943 in Jerusalem.

THE poem reprinted here, *"Mot Tammuz,"* appeared originally in the famous Hebrew periodical *Ha-shiloach*. It is contained also in the collected edition of Tschernichowsky's poems, *Kol Shirei*, published by Schocken books in Tel Aviv in 1937, and appears here by Schocken's permission. The translation from the Hebrew is by Isaac Schwartz.—ED.

Then He brought me to the door of the gate of the Lord's house which was toward the north; and, behold, there sat the women weeping for Tammuz (Ezekiel 8:14).

GO FORTH, O ye daughters
Of Zion, lamenting,
For Tammuz, the radiant Tammuz, is dead!
The days that draw near will be clouded and barren,
A twilight of souls and long autumn ahead.

At sunlight's first gleaming
On radiant mornings
We wake to the grove that was darker than night,
To the grove of inscrutable mysteries and dreams,
To the altar of Tammuz, the altar of light.

What dance shall we dance now
Encircling the altar?
What dance shall we dance before Tammuz today?
Step right and step left—step seven by seven!
We bow down in worship, "Return here!" we pray.

Step right and step left—
Step seven by seven!
And straight-limbed and slow, hands touching, depart!
We go forth to seek out where Tammuz may linger,
The young men alone, and the maidens apart.

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On well-traveled highways
We sought after Tammuz,
On crossroads flooded with sun and with light,
Endeared to the heart by their warmth and their stillness,
Where swallows are splashing, and sparrows take flight;

On narrow paths, stretching
From cornfield to cornfield
And strewn with wild poppies and nettles that sting,
At margins of springs, in the rustling of rushes,
Where flourishing sedge and the vernal reeds sing.

Then down to the river
We passed through the valleys,
Through fields that were weeded, through ditches and brush;
O breezes that sport in the grass, we entreat you!
Have you seen bright Tammuz, O partridge, O thrush?

We sought after Tammuz
In felled trees and thicket,
In gopherwood forests, where ivy vines cling;
Perhaps he is drowsy with incense of cedars,
Or fragrance of mushrooms that grow in a ring.

We sought after Tammuz,
But nowhere could find him!
Up hillock and down into valley again—
We followed the tracks of all secrets and wonders,
Wherever a god might yet live among men.

We see now: our thicket
And tree are but firewood,
And food for the flames is the grove we have known.
Poor, hungry chicks, peeping, are all that encircle
The altar—the altar, a pile of hewn stone.

By falls of the rivers,
Where once we affirmed that
The winds would tell tales at a wizard's command,
We hear the low moaning of reeds, roots withered
By drought, as hot summer returns to the land.

No footprints of spirits
Appear in the meadows;
The wave holds no secrets, and gone is all mirth.
The meadow is pastureland—horned goats are dancing
By watering troughs on the dew-layered earth.

Go forth, O ye daughters
Of Zion, lamenting
This grief-stricken world whence magic is fled!
This grief-stricken world whose soul is eclipsed—
For Tammuz, the radiant Tammuz, is dead!

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ON THE HORIZON

SHOLOM ALEICHEM IN EXILE

Some Unpublished Letters of the Great Humorist

ISRAEL COHEN

RUMMAGING recently among an accumulation of old letters and papers, I came across some letters in Yiddish, written in a small, neat hand, and signed with an elaborate and indecipherable flourish, which immediately evoked a train of pleasant memories. They were letters received over forty years ago from Sholom Aleichem, and vividly recalled the friendship that I enjoyed with that prince of Jewish humorists at the pinnacle of his fame and the nadir of his fortune: when he and his family were compelled by the pogroms in Russia to abandon their home in Kiev and seek peace and shelter in the Western world.

In April 1906, when I was on the literary staff of the *Tribune*, a great London Liberal daily which was too good to live more than two years, I received a letter with an Austrian postmark sent from Lemberg (or Lvov), which then belonged to the Austrian Empire. It was the first of a series of letters that formed the prelude to my friendship with Sholom Aleichem. It was in his characteristic Yiddish style, which I have translated (as in the case of the rest) as faithfully as possible:

Lemberg, Kotlarska 1
April 7, 1906

Highly honored Colleague, Mr. Israel Cohen!

You have certainly heard that there is a country called Russia, in which there are some six million Jews, who have a language, a "jargon," which has a literature that boasts of a good many authors, the least of whom am I, Sholom Aleichem. And because the whole of Jewry there has been battered to pieces, its authors also have not been spared, and they have spread over the wide world. . . . And I am on the way to America, but they have kept me here in Austria—Galicia, Bukovina—and they are dragging me from one city to another and make merry with me. I give readings and the people laugh, say that I am an artist in this matter and usually exaggerate, as is the habit among Jews—and now they are writing to me that I should also travel to England. Should I or not?

From the enclosure you will see wherein my art really consists. Could you not tell me what sort of a public I could have in East and West London? And whether one could reckon upon a public at all? It would naturally be more in accordance with my wishes if I were invited by some club or society. That is how the custom was among us there, that is in Russia, and it is like that also here

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THROUGH this personal memoir with its unpublished letters from the pen of Sholom Aleichem, ISRAEL COHEN here offers a glimpse of Yiddish literature's great figure in his last years. Mr. Cohen has traveled and lectured around the world, and his articles have appeared in a great number of British publications, including the *New Statesman*, the *Manchester Guardian*, *Nineteenth Century and After*, and the London *Quarterly Review*. Mr. Cohen was born in Manchester, England, in 1879, and has been general secretary of the World Zionist Congress, a member of the Board of Deputies of British Jews, and a member of the Royal Institute of International Affairs. He has written a number of books, the latest of which, *Contemporary Jewry*, will be published this year by Methuen in London.

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among the Polish Germans. I shall be very grateful to you if I receive your friendly reply very soon. I have heard that you are a writer on an English paper, and yet I am writing to you in the holy language of the *Taitsch-Chumesh,* because I am a common individual and a simple—

Sholom Aleichem.

IT WAS necessary to make some inquiries as to what arrangements could be made to fit in with Sholom Aleichem's expectations, and there was, therefore, an inevitable delay in replying to him. Consequently I received a second letter, as follows:

Galatz, Rumania
April 27, 1906

Dear Sir:

I am very much surprised that I have not received any reply to my first letter, in which I took the liberty to inform you that I am coming to London. I thought of coming soon after Passover, but the Galician and the Rumanian Jews have given me such a friendly welcome that I shall be able to come only at the end of May, as they are also inviting me (for the second time) to Vienna and also to Switzerland, and one cannot refuse. I am now wandering about and experiencing all the miseries of the great *Golus,* learning about all sorts of things and getting to know people by meeting them. I should like to become acquainted with the East End as well as with the West End of London before I set out on my journey to far-off, fortunate America. . . .

What is your opinion about my plan in England? I am no lecturer, but I read my short sketches before a large audience, it seems with great success, because the people clap and shout "Bravo!" and "Bis!" In London I suppose it's usual to arrange the thing on a bigger scale. The question is: who are to be the arrangers?

I am writing also to my great colleague Zangwill, but I'm afraid that he doesn't understand Yiddish, not even a lick!

My address to the end of May is Lemberg, Kotlarska 1.

Yours sincerely,
Sholom Aleichem

MY REPLY to this letter resulted in Sholom Aleichem's arrival in London in the latter part of May, 1906. A reception comittee had been formed, with the late Joseph Cowen (well known at the time as one of the Zionist leaders in England) as chairman, and Israel Zangwill had promised his support. Our first step was to give a dinner in honor of our distinguished guest at a Jewish restaurant in the East End of London. It was my privilege to propose the toast to his health, and he responded in a speech full of humor and pathos. He was then forty-seven, a man of medium height, with a shock of dark-brown hair brushed back from his forehead, a thick mustache, and a slight tuft on his chin, and he always wore spectacles. He had a refined, intellectual face rather deeply lined, and seldom spoke without a faint smile.

Sholom Aleichem remained in England during this first visit for more than two months, and I was in constant touch with him throughout that time. I was therefore able to learn something about the vicissitudes that had befallen him before he left Russia, of the misfortune that had converted him from a businessman into a novelist, of his friendship with the great Russian writers of the day, of the tragedy of the pogroms, and of his enforced wanderings from land to land. He had been a rabbi for three years before he became a novelist, and he had written in Hebrew before he gave way to the popular demand for Yiddish. At first he had been indifferent to the monetary possibilities of authorship, but in 1891 he lost all his money by speculations on the stock exchange, and was compelled to fall back upon his pen for a living. (He drew upon his unlucky experiences as a speculator for the writing of one of his best books, *Menachem Mendel.*)

He spoke a good deal about the leading Russian authors of the day, most of whom he knew. Gorki had proposed to him in 1902 that the best popular Yiddish writings should be translated into Russian so as to acquaint the Russian people with the true character of the Jews. This suggestion was carried out: many translations were made from the works of Sholom Aleichem, Mendele, and Peretz. In 1903 Sholom Aleichem asked Tolstoy, Gorki, Chekhov, Korolenko, and other Russian writers for contributions to a volume in aid of the victims of the pogroms. Tolstoy wrote three essays, which Sholom Aleichem translated into Yiddish.

From 1903 to 1905 he went on a reading

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tour throughout the Pale of Settlement. He was an excellent reader, clear and expressive, and he told me that he had acquired his elocutionary gifts from the old rabbi who had been his teacher in the humble *cheder* of the Jewish townlet he immortalized as "Kasrilevke." He was severely affected by the pogroms that took place in 1905, when he was living in Kiev. He lost his home and publishing business, and found himself obliged to abandon his work and his hopes for the Yiddish theater, for which he had written some plays. He thereupon undertook a tour of the principal Jewish communities in Galicia, Bukovina, Rumania, Austria, and Switzerland, giving readings from his works, and everywhere met with a friendly and popular welcome and material success. He left his wife and six children in Switzerland before coming to England.

When I asked him which he considered his best works, he said that although *Stempenyu* and *Yossele Solovey* were most in public favor, he was too much of a realistic humorist to be enamored of the romantic style used in them: his preference was for *Menachem Mendel, Tevye der Milchiger,* and *Kleine Menshelach,* portraying the very humblest of the denizens of the Pale.

SHOLOM ALEICHEM gave his first public reading in London on June 1, 1906, at the South Place Institute, a building of rather medium capacity which was usually the rendezvous of Ethical Church preachers. Israel Zangwill, who presided, said that the Yiddish author's visit was the only good thing that had come out of the Russian pogroms, and stigmatized as snobs those English Jews who despised Yiddish. He compared the language to the Provençal dialect, whose poets were lauded, and also to the Tuscan dialect of Dante, which had also at first been disparaged. Sholom Aleichem then read a number of sketches that kept his audience in continual laughter.

As I recall, the sketches included descriptions of "Kasrilevke," an ironical account of the blessings of a large family called "Nachas fun Kinder," and "Milchiges," a monologue by a hungry gourmand. A few weeks later he gave two public readings in Manchester. Dr. Chaim Weizmann, who was at that time a lecturer on biochemistry at the Manchester University, was present on both occasions: he proposed the vote of thanks to the distinguished visitor at the first, and presided at the second. Sholom Aleichem repeated his reading in Leeds, which then contained a predominantly Yiddish-speaking Jewish community, and then returned to London, where he took part in a public celebration of the tenth anniversary of Theodor Herzl's first visit to London. As it proved impracticable to make any further arrangements for readings, he then returned to Switzerland to rejoin his family.

A few weeks later I received the following letter from him:

Geneva, Switzerland
August 12, 1906.

Highly honored Colleague:

I have spent three weeks in Switzerland. I have written a drama for the famous Jewish actor, Jacob P. Adler, of New York, Grand Theater. Adler is now performing in London in the Pavilion Theater. I shall read the play to him on Tuesday, the 14th of August, in Three Nuns Hotel in Aldgate Street. It is in my interest that the reading of the play for Adler should take place in the presence of those who understand me best, and unfortunately I have very few in London for this purpose. I have invited besides yourself Mr. Finkenstein and one of my friends. If it were possible for you to sacrifice two or three hours for me, I would beg you to be at the Three Nuns Hotel, Aldgate Street, on Tuesday, the 14th of August, between 12 and 2. It would be good if you would send me a postcard there to let me know that you are coming and at what time. I shall await you.

Your colleague and admirer,
Sholom Aleichem.

I at once replied to this letter, and on the appointed day I called at the hotel in Whitechapel, where I found Sholom Aleichem awaiting me. With him were Jacob P. Adler and Mrs. Adler, and Mr. Finkenstein, who was the Secretary of Zangwill's Jewish Territorial Organization. Unless my memory deceives me, Sholem Asch, then a young man of twenty-five, who had just arrived in England, was staying at the same hotel at that time, and was also with us. We all went up to Sholom Aleichem's bedroom, a simply furnished chamber into which a few extra

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chairs were brought, and he then began to read his new play, which was called *David ben David*. It was a drama that mirrored all the main currents of thought and conflicting views in Jewish life during the preceding ten years. The central figure was a young Jewish millionaire who was fired by the ambition to establish a Jewish state, but after he had aroused feverish enthusiasm and high expectations his mind became unhinged, and the play had a tragic end. We followed the dramatic developments, which were liberally relieved with touches of humor, in silent and tense expectancy, as the author read his manuscript with varying inflection and suitable gestures. Adler fidgeted and nodded his head occasionally, and when the reading was over he made some criticisms, which the author readily agreed to consider.

Shortly afterwards Sholom Aleichem went to the United States, and I next met him at the Zionist Congress of August 1907, at the Hague. He was a very popular figure among the delegates, gave his autograph very generously, and was photographed together with the poet Bialik. I still have a copy of that photograph hanging up in my study: both authors, in cutaways, are seated, facing one another in animated conversation, the humorist holding a cigar in his gloved hand and the poet (already bald, but with a mustache) fingering a cigarette. That was the last time I saw Sholom Aleichem, although I continued to keep in touch with him by correspondence.

SOMEWHAT disillusioned by Western Jewry he returned to Russia, where he again traveled about from town to town in the Pale, like a medieval troubadour, giving readings instead of singing songs, and depending upon this mode of activity to eke out the rather modest income derived from the sale of his books (which were unfortunately widely pirated). In 1908 he celebrated his Silver Jubilee as an author. Public meetings were held throughout the Pale, at which tributes were paid to his literary genius, and collections of money were also made for his benefit, because his health had begun to fail and his earning powers had declined. At one of these meetings, at which he was present himself, at Baronowicz, he was seized with a fit of coughing during a reading and began to spit blood. He had to be taken out, fell ill, and continued in a serious condition for some weeks; when he had recovered sufficiently he was ordered to the Italian Riviera to make a complete convalescence.

It was at this point that I entered into correspondence with him again (or he with me). Under the auspices of the Union of Jewish Literary Societies, of which I was an executive, I arranged a public meeting in his honor and for his benefit at the University College, London. Since we could not have the ailing author with us, I wrote to him for a special message and received a characteristic letter of eight pages, as follows:

Villa Briand
Nervi, Italy
November 12, 1908

My dear friend and honored colleague,
Israel Cohen:

In the first place allow me to make you a compliment: in your Yiddish writing in the past two years you have made great progress. Three years ago you wrote Yiddish like a real *goy*. Now you write Yiddish, one can say, like a born Englishman. There is a hope that in time you will write Yiddish like a proselyte or a *meshumed*. (But like a Jew, dear friend, you will never write Yiddish—and for that I envy you. I wish I could write Yiddish like you and write what I write in a *goyish* language!)

And secondly, dear friend and colleague, you must excuse me for writing this letter in pencil. I am not doing this out of perversity or mere fancy, but simply because I am writing on my back—lying in bed. And I am lying in bed also not because of wantonness or some fancy or other, but simply because the doctor orders me to do so. He says that a man who can permit himself to spit blood, to cough and have a high temperature, deserves to lie in bed like a monarch. So one can't be a beast and one must obey. And so, my dear friend, I lie in bed near open windows which look out upon the Mediterranean. The silvery waves please me by their reflection of the golden beams of the fiery sun. The blue Italian heaven gives me a greeting from the Land of Israel: "There," it says, "there is also such a heaven, with such a sun and such air." And I swallow the pure light air of the Garden of Eden and feel that I am getting better from day to day, from hour to hour; but when I take

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a look at the calendar and see the date of the 15th of December when I shall have to pay for the villa, and my purse is dry as a desert, then it is bad, it is bad! Speaking of the desert I recall the great miracles which the Lord God performed for our great-great-grandfathers in the desert, and I say to myself: No, it isn't so bad! And this is the proof.

Just now is my jubilee of twenty-five years. The Jewish people have remembered that there is somewhere in the world a Jewish author whose name is Sholom Aleichem, who is living a life of exile and misery, wandering from land to land—now is he in barbarous Russia, now in Western Europe, now curiously enough in free America, and now once more in barbarous Russia. Untiringly he gives readings almost one evening after the other, and at one of these readings he suddenly begins to cough and to bleed. He takes to bed and makes acquaintance with the Angel of Death. . . . But in a wonderful manner he wriggles out of the hands of the Angel of Death, and the doctors send him to Italy just at the very time of his literary festival!

Then there awakens among the Jewish people, merciful children of the merciful, a feeling of pity, and they say to themselves: "Let us show the whole world that Jews know how to esteem their authors and poets." And they set about arranging this celebration in a way that should be beneficial to the subject of the jubilee, and beautiful for the world to see. And Jews can if they only want to. And they set about thinking, and they thought and thought and thought again —Jews can if they only want to—they thought of buying for the beloved hero an estate or a substantial house. Where? Naturally not in barbarous Russia. In Palestine. But why Palestine? Sholom Aleichem is beloved by Territorialists not less than by Zionists. Then in Italy? Why not in America? . . . And so Jews have racked their brains and scraped their pennies—Jews can if only they want to. The entire Yiddish and also Russian press have been seething. The community has been in a ferment. Surely this is no trifle, Sholom Aleichem, *our* Sholom Aleichem! There is no conceivable thing that is too dear for such a people's favorite as Sholom Aleichem! The Jewish people. . . . Money? Ha, ha! Who speaks of money? There is already in deposit for this purpose a special fund of a hundred roubles or ten pounds sterling!!!

I AM pleased, dear colleague, that you and your friends in London want to do me honor. You say it is quite possible that Zangwill will be present at my festival and deliver a speech. Permit me to doubt this. I am an *apikoires*. I hardly believe the great ghetto-portrayer of England will condescend to greet the "jargonist" of Kasrilevke with a Jewish "sholom aleichem."

Nevertheless, I beg of you, good Israel Cohen, if you see Israel Zangwill—to give him a warm greeting from me and say that the success of his play *The Melting Pot* in Washington has afforded me much pleasure in my sick-bed. Every time a brother Jew of mine distinguishes himself in the literature of the world is a source of jubilation to me. I want the world to recognize what we say and think about ourselves. . . .

Have I now written to you about everything? With regard to my health, all the chances are on my side that in the course of six months I must get perfectly better here in Italy. It is only a question of means: shall I have the wherewithal to maintain myself? In answer to that there is a Jewish mode of argument, *mimmo nafshech*, which runs like this: *"Mimmo nafshech*—if there will be the means to keep yourself it will certainly be all right. But what then, supposing there should not be? Why should there not be? . . ." By this way of arguing, brother Cohen, all the Jews of Kasrilevke have been living for years, and this same way lives also their representative, Sholom Aleichem. There is not another optimist like him in the world. He dreams even now while lying in bed that there will be found somewhere in the world a Maecenas, a fool, who will come and say: "Sholom Aleichem, brother! Don't worry. I undertake the responsibility of issuing all your works in twenty volumes, and now be quiet!"

It is a pity I have nobody to copy my newest sketch, which I wrote in bed on the day of my Jubilee, with the title "Shmuel Shmelkess un zein Jubileum." I should like two things: that you should have something new to read on the evening of November 21, and that you should translate it and have it printed according to your liking. I have written

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to my children in Switzerland that they should send you the preface. Do with it what you like.

You will certainly not fail to send me a faithful account of the evening and also send me everything that is printed about me in the English Yiddish papers. I wish you a happy *Yom-Tov!*

Sholom Aleichem.

SELECTIONS from Sholom Aleichem's works were read by a well-known writer, Dr. Angelo S. Rappoport, and I gave an address on the novelist's life and writings. Israel Zangwill, who had been invited to take part, was unable to get away from his home on the south coast, and sent a letter, in which he wrote: "A silver jubilee seems indeed an ironic expression for a man who has gathered scant silver by his work and whose health leaves him so little reason for jubilation. The touches of humor and pathos in our friend's work are so masterly that if he had only had the good fortune to write in English he would have secured the income of an American humorist. His demand upon the Jewish public of today consists not in the fact that he writes in Yiddish, but that he is a man of letters who, after a long and honorable career, finds himself in broken-down health and therefore with diminished earning power for his old age. Let us try to make his silver jubilee golden."

Unfortunately the meeting did not yield much gold. The attendance was affected by bad weather, and those who came were richer in sympathy than in money. I therefore supplemented the appeal by writing letters to the Jewish press. The final result was that I raised just a little over forty pounds—a trivial and miserable tribute to a great writer. I sent the sick man ten pounds each week until there was nothing more left, and each time I received a letter brimful of gratitude and good humor as though the remittance were ten times as large.

Sundry contributions from sympathizers continued to reach me at lengthening intervals, which I promptly forwarded. The last of which I have a record is a check that came to me in August 1909 from South Africa through the editor of the *Jewish Chronicle,* and the acknowledgment that I received from Sholom Aleichem was addressed from Sanatorium St. Blasien, in Germany—proof that his health still needed careful attention. He died seven years later, in 1916, in New York, at the age of fifty-seven.

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THE STUDY OF MAN

A BROADER APPROACH TO JEWISH HISTORY

The Inadequacy of the National View

H. SCHMIDT

A GLANCE at Jewish Jerusalem today reveals an astonishing variety of social groups that seem to live their lives in more or less separate compartments. Sometimes this fact is brought into the limelight of the daily press, as when the ultra-orthodox Guardians of the Sabbath clash with other parts of the population; more often, the great gulf between the worlds existing side by side in the same city receives little attention. Yet engage a number of Jerusalemites on such subjects as education, religious tradition, or Arab refugees, and you will realize that the wide diversity in manners, customs, dress, and taste, is but the outer form of a disparity in spiritual approach and categories of thought.

Thus it is possible to come across German Jews with a conception of citizenship reminiscent of Prussian tradition, anxious to conform strictly to the official line taken by the authorities, as if they were still laboring under the dominance of Hitlerism and Wilhelmism; or Jews from Poland or Russia whose naive pride in rational philosophy and the demonstration of atheism serves as living evidence to the historian that for the Jews of Eastern Europe, Enlightenment came much later than in the West; or to find other communities, of Oriental Jews, whose life testifies to the fact that their period of Enlightenment is only just dawning. Leave Jerusalem for a trip to the collective settlements of the Emek, attend their meetings and visit their classrooms, and you can study not only the problems of 20th-century socialism but also those of 19th-century labor movements, for these problems have remained strangely preserved within the minds of many of the older pioneers.

If one passes from Israel to Italy, Morocco, France, England, and the United States, the picture Jewry presents today only increases in variety; a variety which is increased still more when we add the descendants of all Jews who are considered outside the Jewish pale but continue still to engage the attention of the sociologists and the historians. These could be found in German POW cages in Egypt and England as *Judenstämmlinge*, half-Aryans, Italian Fascists, and Communists.

In the face of this variegated panorama of modern Jewry, the trained observer cannot but be struck by the contrast between the evidence of the present and the customary description of the past. Where is the modern Jewish historian who has accounted for the enormous dissimilarity and contrast found among the Jews of our

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THE nationalist interest has inevitably been a major factor in the writing of history in many countries in recent decades—and it has increasingly been the pattern through which the long course of Jewish history has been viewed by Jewish historians. H. SCHMIDT here tries to evaluate the soundness of this approach, and suggests certain shortcomings of a rubric that overwhelmingly stresses Jewish homogeneity and Jewish self-determination, as against "external" and "alien" influences. As a lecturer on history at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, and assistant to Richard Koebner, professor of modern history, Mr. Schmidt has had a particularly good vantage point from which to observe the main trends in the writings of Jewish history. He was born in Germany in 1916, studied at the University and Rabbinical Seminary in Breslau, at the University of London, and at the Hebrew University, where he has been since 1936.

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time? If we regard existing society as a cross-section of a fabric whose fibers run back into the past, the present social structure and position of any group is turned into a historical source of the first order. Conversely, if the present position of any people is not sufficiently accounted for by its historiography, the historian is forced to suspect that the method employed may be at fault.

MODERN Jewish historiography, as it has developed, has been dominated by one major school of thought which deliberately chooses an approach stressing the homogeneity of the Jewish people and its common identity and fate. This was the approach of Simon Dubnow (1860-1941), the historian of the Jews of Eastern Europe, and the author of the *Universal History of the Jewish People* (in German, Russian, Yiddish, and Hebrew: it is not yet translated into English); and it is the approach of Yitzhak F. Baer and Ben-Zion Dinaburg, two outstanding historians of modern Israel at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. (Baer's essay on *Galut* was published in an English translation by Schocken Books in 1947; his major works, on the Jews in Christian Spain, have not been translated. Dinaburg's historical works are also not yet available in English.)

Dubnow himself called his outlook on Jewish history "national-autonomistic." He postulated the existence of a Jewish nation as the shaper and creator of its own social and spiritual history; the struggle of that people for its existence, conceived in the form of a continuous dialectical process, is Dubnow's chief theme. The history of the non-Jewish world interests Dubnow only to the extent that it means a real or potential threat to the survival of the national entity.

Dubnow—to illustrate his approach—is critical of the French Jewish Notables of 1806, who accepted the status of French citizenship offered them by Napoleon, because such an action called into question the national unity of the Jewish people. If French Jews were only Frenchmen, English Jews only Englishmen, and so on, where was the Jewish people? He records with approval how, against the background of a rising tide of anti-Semitism in Russia, Austria-Hungary, Germany, and France, before the First World War, Jews rallied around their own national movements. However, just as in the first case he will not be able to explain why the French Jewish Notables acted the way they did, so in the second case he will be at a loss to explain why the Jews, at the height of their national revival, responded with patriotic enthusiasm, in the First World War, to the call to arms of their respective countries.

IN BAER and Dinaburg, the national approach to Jewish history takes the form of an endeavor to draw out the "unbroken chain from Abraham to our own time," as Nahum Sokolow puts it in the introduction to his *History of Zionism*. Both concentrate on the forces arising from within the Jewish group during the two thousand years of Jewish Diaspora history. Emphasizing the continuity of the Jewish nation, they conceive its history as "bound together by a homogeneous unity which includes all periods of time and pervades all places, and all of which are interrelated in historical significance." (In the Hebrew journal *Zion*, Volume I.) Seen from this angle, Jewish Diaspora history presents a pattern of alternating prosperity and catastrophe, adjustment to a new world and ultimate estrangement from it. Jewish suffering becomes a constantly recurring subject resulting from the "slavery of the Exile," and the natural conclusion of Jewish history is the return to Palestine.

This wholly negative attitude towards the Exile is the upshot of Baer's book *Galut*. There it is summed up in the words: "Galut remains what it has always been: political slavery, which has to be completely liquidated." Persecution of the Jews on the one hand, and readiness to assimilate them on the other, are for Baer but two sides of the same coin—the attempt of the other nations to wipe out Israel which has persisted from the days of the Greeks down to our own time. This forms for him the thread by which he can unify the variety of Jewish history.

Both Baer and Dinaburg would like historical knowledge to serve as an important part of the spiritual basis of national consciousness and culture. They believe that the millennia-old continuity of Jewish history they demonstrate gives Jewish nationalism a more profound character than that possessed by its European counterparts. Jewish nationalism is hallowed by the Biblical tradition, which is now to become part of the Jewish life of Israel. In line with this program for Jewish history is the type of theme that the historians of this school have

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selected for emphasis. They have traced the link between the Diaspora and Palestine, and between the Jews of different countries. They have searched for, and analyzed, cases of the existence of Jewish autonomy within the larger community in different historical epochs. They have studied the influence of the messianic elements of the Jewish religion on everyday life, the history of messianic movements, and the emergence of the national movement out of messianic hopes. They have emphasized the growth and the important position of the Hebrew language.

THERE is no school of Jewish historical thought which rivals what we may call the national school, either in the power of its outlook to introduce comprehensibility and order into Jewish history, or in the value of its scholarly achievement. Its conception of an internal Jewish development and Jewish continuity has helped us understand such important phenomena of Jewish history as Jewish mysticism, the Conversos, messianic movements, and Hasidism.

However, when we turn to modern Jewish history, and the themes that are characteristic for it, we discover that the insight gained by the homogeneous approach is less satisfactory, and that many features of the contemporary position of the Jews have eluded these historians. Their desire to see Jews autonomous and homogeneous in the future leads to a special interest in those aspects of the Jewish past which show the Jews as homogeneous and autonomous. However, since the dissolution of the ghetto and the emancipation of the Jews and up through the period of the Jewish struggle for an independent state, non-Jewish elements and influences—perforce breaking Jewish homogeneity and autonomy—have been most prominent in the determination of Jewish thought and action. Features of Judaism that were essential and typical in the past—such as monotheism, for instance—have become less important. And the non-Jewish features which can alone make a good deal of the present character of world Jewry intelligible are assigned secondary rank by this group of historians.

If present-day Jewish society can only be understood by the combined study of the Jewish past on the one hand and the powerful forces of general world history on the other, or, to put the matter even more radically, by conceiving modern Jewish history as a specific instance of the major trends of modern world history, then Jewish historians of the national school can be said to have failed in their task.* They have written the history of the past 150 years as if they were writing the history of medieval Jewish ghettos. With this approach, they have been able to make some sense of East European Jewish history, with its comparatively great spiritual and social isolation almost down to modern times, but they have misunderstood many of the most important aspects of the history of West European Jewry. Both the rise of Jewish nationalism, and the rise of anti-Semitism, the two questions to which the historians of the national school have devoted the most energy, have only been half-understood because of their approach.

THE history of Zionism, to begin with, is explained in purely Jewish terms, and the background of world politics of which it forms so vital a part is either ignored, improperly reported, or not given its full weight. In Adolph Boehm's *The Zionist Movement* (in German, Tel Aviv, 1935), for example, a study in which the treatment of the Zionist material as such is beyond reproach, we find the following sentence: "Incidentally, critics [of Herzl's policy toward Germany] forget . . . that the relations between Germany and Great Britain at the time of Herzl's political activity were very intimate: between 1898 and 1904, Great Britain made three offers of alliance to Germany, which, however, were all turned down." The student of the international relations of that period will fail to discover any marked intimacy in Anglo-German relations, or any three British offers of alliance. It is true that Joseph Chamberlain, the British Prime Minister (whom Boehm gives the doubtful title of "The Creator of British Neo-Imperialism"), was attracted to the notion of a Teutonic Triple Alliance (Germany, Great Britain, and the United States),

* Those historians of contemporary Jewry who have not, like Dubnow, Baer, and Dinaburg, emphasized the tracing of a continuous thread of Jewish history, are characterized by a special defect: their presentation is fragmentary, as they have found no way of unifying the variety of material they must present, and their volumes consequently lose in clarity and interest. This is true of Ismar Elbogen's *A Century of Jewish Life* (Philadelphia, 1944), and the modern portions of Salo Baron's *Social and Religious History of the Jews* (New York, 1937).

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but he was never able to win over the Prime Minister, Lord Salisbury. While we can understand the source of Boehm's error, it nevertheless destroys our confidence in his understanding of the diplomatic background of Herzl's activity.

The handling of the El Arish offer of 1903 by Jewish historians also illustrates their naivety in understanding general history. In 1903 Herzl was negotiating with the British over the possibility of settling Jews in the desert area between Egypt and Palestine. After the discussions had been carried on for a while, the British dropped the scheme. Jewish historians—with the exception of A. Bein, in his biography of Herzl—have contented themselves with the official British explanation: that the Egyptian government refused to allot the necessary amount of Nile water for irrigation. Margolis and Marx, in *A History of the Jewish People* (Philadelphia, 1927), go farther and explain that Lord Cromer, the British Political Resident, was favorably disposed, but the opposition of the Egyptians could not be overcome. Yet at this time, as the student of history knows, the Egyptian government could make no decision which was not approved by the British Resident, and Lord Cromer was the *de facto* ruler of Egypt.

Indeed, far from being favorable to the scheme, Lord Cromer had convinced the English government that the influx of thousands of Russian and "cosmopolitan" subjects who could claim the protection of their governments might lead to foreign intervention and complications. This argument was very effective, particularly as Herzl never ceased to claim for the new immigrants the rights to the Capitulations and special status for privileged Europeans in the Ottoman Empire. Jewish immigration would have meant increased Russian, Austrian, and possibly German influence in the Middle East. All these considerations, and others of a like order, have remained outside the field of vision of Jewish writers.

The important fact that around this time Jewish organizations were being used to support the expansionist program of the European powers is also ignored by Jewish historians. Elbogen (*A Century of Jewish Life*) mentions that the Hilfsverein der deutschen Juden served German interests in the Ottoman Empire and enjoyed the support of the German government, but he does not follow up his point. And he confines himself to the historically barren statement that the most conciliatory attitude of certain people could not bring about an agreement between the Hilfsverein and the Alliance Israélite Universelle, without mentioning that the rivalry of France and Germany helps explain that fact.

The weakness in general historical background trips up Margolis and Marx at another point, in their discussion of the Damascus Libel of 1840 (in which Jews were accused of ritual murders), an incident which rivaled the Dreyfus case as an international cause célèbre. They are unable to explain why England and Austria took up a pro-Jewish position, and France an anti-Jewish position. However, at this very time, Lord Palmerston, the British Foreign Secretary, was organizing a coalition to support the Ottoman Empire against France, which was supporting the independent power of Mehemet Ali in Egypt and Syria. It is only against this background that the positions taken by the great powers have any meaning in this case.

Indeed, we find that the history of anti-Semitism, as well as the history of Zionism, is treated as much as possible like a closed Jewish affair. Baer himself takes this approach in his *History of the Jews in Christian Spain*, when writing of the expulsion of the Jews from Spain—an event that does not properly belong to modern Jewish history, but which is worth examining for the light it throws on the way in which Jewish historians approach anti-Semitism. For Baer, the expulsion from Spain is an expression of a "Judeo-Christian conflict," which has taken many forms. True enough that when viewed through Jewish eyes alone, the Spanish persecution of the Jews appears as part of the chain of expulsions which affected the Jews elsewhere in Western Christendom. Indeed, it can be seen as part of the red thread of suffering that stretches through Jewish history from Pharaoh to Adolph Hitler. Yet, when the political and social conditions of Spain in the 15th century are assessed with a non-Jewish, a European eye, a different line of interpretation becomes apparent. We see Jewish persecution as part of the struggle of the rising central political powers in Europe against all the non-conforming political forces that threatened the unity of the new states. Just as we observe in the course of the unification of Spain a struggle against the political power of the neo-Christians, the Moriscoes, and the Jews, we discover all over

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Europe similar conflicts, beginning with the persecution of the Hussites in Bohemia, the Protestants in some parts of Germany, the Catholics and Puritans in later Tudor and early Stuart England, and the persecution of the Huguenots in France. Everywhere religious conformity was demanded in the interest of political unity; the attacks on Jews were not simply, therefore, an expression of Judeo-Christian conflict.

The question arises, reading modern Jewish history, in which anti-Semitism looms so large, how indeed we may write the history of Jews in Western lands, and what we are to do with the bursts of Jewish creativity we sometimes find. Dubnow, writing of the group of German Jewish scholars who founded the "Science of Judaism," the *Wissenschaft des Judentums,* considers them the product of German reaction and anti-Semitism, and, true to his methods, singles out the simple desire to fight anti-Semitism as the sole motive which aroused interest in the new scientific approach to Judaism. Marx and Margolis, on the other hand, present Zunz and German Jewish scholarship as a meteoric phenomenon, offering no explanation at all.

However, a rather different approach is possible, and one which has been illustrated by the contemporary German Jewish historians Eugen Täubler and Selma Stern. Both of these writers stress the fact that the history of German Jewry in the last two centuries must be viewed as part of German history, and cannot be approached purely from the point of view of an internal history of the German Jewish community. If we look at Zunz and his school with the background of German history in mind, we can see clearly reflected the spiritual ferment of Prussia, and of Berlin, and particularly the impact of the writings of Niebuhr (1776-1831), who, in the words of Harnack, "roused the spirit of history in the shape of science and for the first time realized what great powers were inherent in historical criticism." There can be no doubt that Zunz was directly or indirectly influenced by his milieu: by the neo-humanist Wilhelm v. Humboldt (1767-1835), the grammarian Jacob Grimm (1785-1863), and the jurist F. K. Savigny (1779-1861), the German scholars who laid the foundation for the *Geisteswissenschaften,* of which the Verein für Kultur und Wissenschaft der Juden of Berlin is a clear offspring.

Täubler considers the main theme of Jewish history in the Diaspora to be the problems arising from the constant contact of the Jewish with the non-Jewish world ("Über das Studium der jüdischen Geschichte," *Mitteilungen des Gesamtarchivs der deutschen Juden* 1911, Volume III) and believes that the study of general history must be made a cardinal starting point for the understanding of Jewish history. To be sure, that principle has not been ignored by the historians we have discussed, for the dominant school of historical thought headed by Baer and Dinaburg frankly acknowledges the debt it owes to Eugen Täubler. Where it differs from him, however, is in the evaluation of non-Jewish influences. Whereas the national school regards non-Jewish forces as external and secondary, Täubler and Selma Stern assign to them primary importance. A historical approach cannot be judged by whether it is right or wrong, but by whether it permits the fullest and most accurate picture. And, in general, Jewish scholars and students, we have tried to show, have not yet sufficiently realized that modern Jewish society, in its present manifold variety, as well as its history during the last two centuries, can only stand out in plastic relief when examined "stereoscopically," from a Jewish and non-Jewish angle at the same time.

Were this approach to be adopted, many important and exciting subjects that are as yet unbroached by Jewish historians would come into their field of attention and interest. For example:

(1) the history of Jewish emancipation in the light of the rise and fall of the middle class;

(2) the influence of Christianity on Jewish thought and institutions;

(3) the origins of political Zionism, viewed within the context of the internal and external policy of the Great Powers;

(4) the history of German Jewry, studied as the history of a Jewish-European symbiosis;

(5) anti-Semitism, seen as an aspect of a general European crisis;

(6) a comparative study of Jewish and European nationalism;

(7) a comparative study of the Jewish and international labor movements;

(8) Anglo-Jewish relations since the establishment of the British Mandate of Palestine, seen as a chapter of British decline in Asia;

(9) the development of modern Jewish political parties;

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(10) the reflection of contemporary historical thought in Jewish history-writing.

All these topics have in common a double aspect: a typical trend of recent world history is found combined with a specific case from Jewish history, and both strands can be woven into one fabric.

WE MAY illustrate the potentialities of this approach by considering the last subject suggested, that concerning historical thought—which would not have been listed had it not been for the series of stimulating lectures by Richard Koebner at the Hebrew University in 1946-7. Dinaburg, in the introduction to his *Israel in Exile,* had mentioned the link between the aims of Jewish history and the main lines of contemporary Jewish thought. But whereas Dinaburg merely desires to make of Jewish history-writing one significant stream of contemporary Jewish thought—forming, together with streams arising from politics, religion, and so on, an intellectual milieu—in Koebner's investigation, history is not seen as an independent contributor to contemporary thought (Jewish and non-Jewish), but as its very product.

Thus, Isaak Markus Jost (1793-1860) wrote under the influence of the contemporary German version of the Enlightenment; Joseph Salvador (1796-1873) reflects the ideas of the French Revolution; Heinrich Graetz and Moses Hess, German idealism; Dubnow mirrors the dense Jewish population of Eastern Europe, while Baer and Dinaburg clearly testify to the national revival focussed round Palestine. If our conceptions of history are seen as an intrinsic part of our social consciousness, as R. G. Collingwood's philosophy of history seems to suggest, this is only what we might expect.

If this interrelation is as close as these examples suggest, then the conception of "assimilation," which plays such an important part in Jewish historical writing, is an obstacle rather than a help for the understanding of the historical process. For the term "assimilation," and the negative, almost treasonable, significance attached to it by the national school, prejudges and confuses a primary theme of modern Jewish history, namely that very interrelation between the Jewish and non-Jewish worlds which has as yet been left unexplored. When Dubnow writes: "The current of assimilation gradually gives way to the modern form of national movement, which for the 20th century promises to be as significant as assimilation was for the 19th" (Volume VIII of his *Universal History,* German edition), he thereby implies that what he calls "the modern form of national movement" represents the very opposite of assimilation, its antithesis. Yet modern Jewish nationalism contains as many elements of assimilation as any other form of social adjustment.

Adaptation to the prevailing circumstances is a biological and social necessity no individual or group can dispense with. It is this kind of inevitable accommodation to the non-Jewish social and political environment which is the clue to the present position of Jewry and to the history of its recent past. The negative use of the term "assimilation" as a master concept is, therefore, apt to blur the field of vision where it ought to be clearest. We cannot reject or dispense with the process of "assimilation"; more profitably, we ought to turn our study to describing, analyzing, and evaluating the nature and fruits of the particular assimilation of a specific time or place.

THERE is one last consideration we must bring forward in urging the writing of Jewish history as a strand of modern history, and that has to do with education. At no period of modern history did the Jews form an isolated body in the history of mankind; and particularly for the last century or so the fate of nations has been closely interdependent and interwoven. Today, the weal or woe of one may spell the prosperity or misfortune of others. Just as it proved most unfortunate for the Germans to have been taught their national history in an atmosphere of mental and political isolation and "encirclement," it would be equally disastrous if Jewish youth were to be taught a pattern of Jewish history limited to the Jewish-persecuting nations of the Diaspora on the one hand, and the revived Jewish nation in Palestine, on the other. Such a history could foster a paranoid outlook toward a world seen as an anti-Jewish conspiracy by the Gentiles.

The tendency toward group-hatred and group-isolationism is a recognized feature of modern collective pathology. Future historians will probably find that we have all caught a good deal of it from the Germans. The way history is being taught and written may either spread the disease or immunize people against it. We must not lose sight of this in the writing and teaching of modern Jewish history.

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LETTERS FROM READERS

Mr. Rosenfeld's Article

To the Editor of Commentary:

During the four years that the American Jewish Committee has sponsored Commentary, it has, as you know, never attempted to exercise control over its contents. On the contrary, the Committee has recognized that anything short of complete editorial freedom might impede you in your efforts to make of the publication what we hoped it would become—one independent of, though subventioned by, the American Jewish Committee.

Each issue of Commentary reprints the Statement of Aims adopted October 20, 1945 on the eve of publication of its first issue, declaring, among other things, that "its pages will be hospitable to diverse points of view." We have of course recognized that this hospitality might occasionally extend to points of view actually at variance with those of the agency. This risk we have not shrunk from taking, because we have deemed it desirable that the magazine reflect a wide variety of opinion in Jewish life. And this risk was by no means imaginary. From time to time Commentary actually has published articles propounding theses out of line with official policy of the American Jewish Committee; but although, as you also know, it has not always been a simple matter to explain this anomaly to our supporters, we have nevertheless not been disposed to revise a policy which, on balance, has so thoroughly justified itself.

The publication in your October issue, on the other hand, of an article entitled "Adam and Eve on Delancey Street," which, besides offending the religious sensibilities of a large number of our co-religionists, violated every canon of good taste, was, in the opinion of our officers and Administrative Committee, an abuse of the editorial freedom accorded you. It was a relief to learn from the Editor's note in the November issue that you realize that a serious error was committed; and I am pleased to have received additional assurances from you and from the Commentary Publication Committee that steps will be taken to ensure against a similar occurrence in the future.

Jacob Blaustein
President
American Jewish Committee

"Academic Freedom and Academic Integrity"

To the Editor of Commentary:

In his article "Academic Freedom and Academic Integrity" (Commentary, October 1949), Professor Sidney Hook accuses me of intellectual dishonesty and lack of elementary scholarly care in my study of the recent dismissals at the University of Washington (*American Scholar,* Summer 1949). The significance of the University of Washington case in the present conflict over freedom of teaching makes it important to set the record straight in regard to my article.

My analysis was based primarily on official reports, supplemented by local and national press accounts and by direct correspondence: the official University *Record of the Tenure Cases* and two reports of the State Committee on Un-American Activities (the Canwell Committee), its *Report* to the Legislature of January 1949 and the earlier *Second Report,* which includes the transcript of testimony on the University cases before the Canwell Committee and shows Mr. Canwell's method of conducting the hearings. Some evidence from the press and from individuals I was able to verify from the *Transcript of the Tenure Committee* of which there is a copy in Washington, DC. Other evidence I had verified for me in Seattle. Because of the difficulty in getting accuracy on such a complicated issue at this distance, I sent my manuscript to five persons in Seattle, three of them professors at the University, for checking and correction. Each of these individuals had been in a position to follow closely the proceedings of the Canwell Committee and of the Tenure Committee, and, as far as I am able to judge, had no commitments in advance which would interfere with reliable observation.

Professor Hook criticizes the fact that I based my account of the speech Mr. Canwell delivered in Cheney, Washington, on October 6, 1948, not on press accounts, but (as stated in my footnote) on the report of four people who heard and took notes on the speech. The Spokane *Spokesman-Review,* strong supporter of Mr. Canwell, and the Communist-oriented *People's World,* of San Francisco, both car-

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ried brief summaries of this speech. There seemed, however, to be a presumption in favor of the greater reliability of the full report of the speech sent to me by a teacher in Cheney and confirmed by three other teachers who heard it. The *Spokesman-Review*, for example, reports Mr. Canwell as saying: "There are more Communists in Washington now than there were in any of the nations which fell prey to Russia" (October 7, 1948, page 51), whereas the teachers quote Mr. Canwell as making the somewhat more careful statement that "There are more Communists per capita in Washington than there were in Poland or Czechoslovakia. . . . " The conclusion of the speech as reported by the teachers—"Social conditions have nothing to do with Communism. Communism is caused by Communists and nothing else"—is not quoted in the *Spokesman-Review* but is paralleled by another printed statement of Mr. Canwell's: "Communism is not caused by economic conditions. If Communism had its genesis in poverty . . . the log cabins of the pioneers of America would have bred a race of Communists. . ." (*Exchange*, National Exchange Club, June 1948).

In regard to the particular sentence I referred to, "If someone insists there is discrimination against Negroes in this country, or that there is inequality of wealth, there is every reason to believe that person is a Communist," there was a slight difference of opinion among the four people who reported it as to word order and as to whether Mr. Canwell said " . . . *or* that there is inequality of wealth . . . " or "...*and* that there is inequality of wealth..."; there was no difference as to the substance of what Mr. Canwell had said. Because of the tense political atmosphere in which public education at present operates in Washington, I did not publish the names of the four teachers on whose account of this speech I based my statement. Their names and official positions, their complete report of the speech, and the pertinent correspondence, have been submitted to the editor of the *American Scholar*.

As FURTHER proof of my unscrupulous scholarship Professor Hook says that Professor Sophus K. Winther "has indignantly denied" the impression I "sought to give" that he "had disavowed the article he wrote for *Harper's* about his experiences in the Communist party." My words were that he now said this article was "an imaginative treatment of facts not to be taken as literal in detail." It is not clear what it is that Professor Winther denies. Is it his own testimony before the Tenure Committee that his article was " . . . an imaginative discussion . . . in a rather light vein so that it would not be taken by the average reader as a statement of literal and absolute fact" (*Transcript*, Vol. VIII, page 746), and that it was "an exaggeration, but of course it was based upon a certain amount of fact" (page 769)?

Professor Hook finds further "violation of the ethics of scholarship" in my suggestion that the dismissals at the University of Washington may have been influenced by the pending legislative appropriation for the University budget, including the appropriation for the new medical school. Since any analysis of social institutions I have done leads me to the conclusion that such pressures do influence public education, since professors at the University and citizens of Seattle who know the situation intimately described in detail the operation of these pressures in this case in terms much stronger and more explicit than those I used, and since none of the available documented evidence in any way contradicted their statements, it would have been distortion of evidence if I had failed to make any reference to the possibility that such pressures may have affected this decision. In another situation Professor Hook might recognize that political and financial pressures on public education do exist in contemporary society and that even well-intentioned individuals sometimes yield to them.

Space does not allow mention of the evidence in my article that Professor Hook ignores or more than brief mention of the more important problems his article raises.

His article concerns identification of "fellow-travelers," but, except that they are persons whose judgments differ from Professor Hook's, criteria for identifying them are obscure. Does the term apply to the more than one hundred professors at the University of Washington who have publicly condemned the dismissal of their colleagues, and in the same pronouncement stated their rejection of the Communist party and their support of "every resistance to totalitarianism" (University of Washington *Daily*, April 7, 1949)?

Professor Hook has repeatedly stated that, in determining competence of teachers, judgment by their faculty colleagues should be decisive. Yet in the case of the University of Washington he supports the President and the Board of Regents in acting contrary to the recommendation of the majority of the Faculty Committee on Tenure. President Allen's words were, "I recommend that the Board hold with the minority . . ." (*Record of the Tenure Cases*, page 97). Is it only when the judgment of a majority of a faculty agrees with his own that Professor Hook thinks it should be respected?

HELEN M. LYND
Sarah Lawrence College

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To the Editor of Commentary:

Professor Sidney Hook's article "Academic Integrity and Academic Freedom" seems to me to fall considerably below the level of what we have a right to expect of both Commentary and Professor Hook, and my preference would be to think of it as simply one of those unfortunate but familiar by-products of a cold war on the home front which all concerned will some day be happy to forget. Since, however, it attacks the competence and integrity of two honest and able scholars and makes proposals which, if adopted, would worsen the already bad condition of academic freedom in this country, it calls for a reply. In disagreeing with Professor Hook on this subject I shall, no doubt, lay myself open to those same charges of intellectual dishonesty and/or incompetence which are his peculiar contribution to the defense of "the liberal spirit" as he seems now to understand it. That, however, is a risk that must be run.

One sentence in the article provides, I think, an instructive insight into its method and import. Professor Hook tells us that "statistical studies show that to this day members of the professoriat constitute the strongest and most influential group of Communist fellow-travelers in the United States" (page 330). Given the commonly understood meaning of "Communist fellow-travelers" in this country as "disloyal Americans," and the existing public resentment against them, such a statement can hardly fail to heighten the suspicion and ill-will now current in academic circles and to increase the difficulties of independent thinking and teaching on controversial subjects. Yet Professor Hook does not tell us what these statistics are, or where he got them, or whom they are intended to discredit. By what criteria were the "Communist fellow-travelers" among the "professoriat" identified? His own use of this damaging designation is curiously elastic. In this article, persistence in defending Communists against even "the mildest and most justified" (page 330) of administrative measures is noted among the characterizing traits of the breed. Whether those guilty of this particular lapse from academic propriety are *ipso facto* identified as "fellow-travelers" by those from whom Professor Hook gets his statistics we are not told, nor how, if they are, the meaning of "mild" and "justified" is determined for purposes of computation. Hence it is difficult to tell what, if anything, his assertion means or on how many of his fellow professors it is intended to throw suspicion. As it stands, and in its probable influence on its readers, it is loose talk of a sort more likely to injure than to protect the integrity and freedom that he proposes to defend.

Professor Hook's proposals for dealing with the "fellow-traveling professor" are two. He wants compulsory courses in the colleges to present the truth about both Communism and democracy to the students in such a way as to protect their minds against the wiles and errors of the "travelers." And he calls on the untainted members of the academic community to denounce their erring colleagues in public in the manner for which his own article, presumably, provides a model. I cannot believe that either of these procedures would reliably serve the ends he has in view.

There is no doubt that students ought to have an accurate knowledge of both Communism and democracy and that the colleges ought in the best way possible supply it. The question is how this can best be done. And the danger is that required courses set up *ad hoc* to expose the enemy (including of course those members of "the professoriat" that Professor Hook or others who speak with authority find unsound) would operate in fact as "cold war courses" of a too familiar sort in which neither objectivity, independent inquiry, nor integrity would play a major part. And I agree with him that objectivity, unregimented thinking, and scholarly integrity in our colleges are, in these times, greatly needed.

"By their fruits shall ye know them" is an old pragmatic maxim, and a good way to understand what we can expect if Professor Hook's proposals are adopted is to observe the use he has made of the opportunity this article affords him to wage war on fellow scholars. Dr. Alexander Meiklejohn and Dr. Helen Lynd have written articles criticizing the University of Washington for dismissing members of its faculty for membership in the Communist party. (Dr. Meiklejohn's article appeared in the New York *Times Magazine*, March 27, 1949, and Dr. Lynd's in the *American Scholar*, Summer 1949.) Evidently criticism of this action is not by itself sufficient to identify the critic as a "Communist fellow-traveler," for Professor Hook is kind enough to say that even "genuine liberals" may honestly disagree as to its wisdom (page 331). But it turns out nonetheless that the two scholars who have offered such criticism most effectively to a wide public audience have been guilty of lapses from academic competence or integrity of a grievous kind. Dr. Meiklejohn is convicted of ignorance and confusion which, one gathers, only a required course could cure, and Dr. Lynd of violations of the ethics of scholarship in which the fellow-traveling mentality is plainly displayed. If anyone who has defended the University of Washington administration in this controversy has committed comparable errors, Professor Hook

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does not tell us about it. It would appear that while one *may* possibly disagree with the authorities on this matter without sinning against academic integrity in the process, the risks of so doing are grave.

MINDFUL of this peril, I have read and reread Dr. Meiklejohn's article and must report that I can find in it no evidence of either the confusion or the ignorance of which he is accused. On the contrary, it seems to me that Professor Hook's criticism radically misinterprets the argument he is attacking. Indeed, if he did not himself so confidently assume his own objectivity and logical impeccability in these matters, I should have been inclined to believe that in this case Professor Hook's "passionate" defense of truth had led him to a result in which there was more of passion than of truth, or even of elementary fairness to a fine and courageous teacher. But Dr. Meiklejohn's article can speak for itself. I suggest that COMMENTARY, having given currency to the charges made against it, should now reprint this article in full and allow its readers to judge for themselves who it is that is confused. Many of them, I think, will find it well worth reading on its own account.

The attack on Dr. Lynd is equally unwarranted. She is accused of presenting as a quotation from Mr. (formerly Senator) Canwell of the State of Washington a statement which is in fact a report of what other people say he said at a public meeting, and this Professor Hook considers a violation of the ethics of scholarship.

Now, how did Professor Hook ferret out the fact that this statement was not a direct quotation but the report of persons who had attended the meeting? He read it in Dr. Lynd's article, where precisely this information is given. But, Professor Hook objects, it was given pages away from the quotation and in small print. True enough. But there was a small number immediately following the statement as quoted, the clear purpose of which was to refer the reader to this further information, similarly numbered, on a later page. This device, often called "the footnote," is a well known part of the apparatus (if Professor Hook will excuse the expression) of scholarship, and its use among "the professoriat" to indicate the source of quoted statements is of long standing. Such "footnotes" are quite often printed in smaller type and frequently, when there are a number of them, put at the end of an article, a chapter, or even a book, without deliberate intent to mislead the reader. Professor Hook himself was evidently able to figure out the connection between this traditional symbol and its intended referent, and I am confident that many other readers of the *American Scholar*, in which the article appeared, were equally astute.

This, however, is not the sum of Dr. Lynd's offending. She did not write Mr. Canwell to ask him whether or not he made this statement as reported. Professor Hook did write him and is happy to announce that the ex-Senator says he never said it and adds that it was made up out of whole cloth by the Communist party and its sympathizers in the State of Washington. This is good enough for Professor Hook; it is just the sort of allegation in which his mind comes happily to rest. On this rock he will build his case.

Yet politicians have before now been known to disavow embarrassing statements which men of good hearing and good conscience had plainly heard them make. And if even one-tenth of those in the State of Washington whom one-time Senator Canwell has denounced as Communists or Communist sympathizers were so in fact, the evergreen state would by no means be the loyal American community that it plainly is. Why then was this assertion simply accepted at its face value by Professor Hook, not only as clearing Mr. Canwell but as discrediting Dr. Lynd and her informants? I should have supposed that the ethics of scholarship, which he so rightly values, would have counseled him to check quite carefully on Mr. Canwell's record for reliability in allegations of this sort before accepting and passing on to the readers of COMMENTARY so damaging an accusation. He would have found, e.g., in the record of the charges brought by the former Senator and his committee against Professor Melvin Rader, and their decisive refutation, extremely pertinent evidence on just this matter. (For recent developments in this case, which has been for the past year of deep concern to practicing liberals in this country, see the Seattle *Times*, October 21, 1949.) If Professor Hook has actually taken pains to inform himself about it, and Mr. Canwell's part in it, his simple faith in this new allegation is very hard to understand. If, however, he has accepted and broadcast this accusation without such an investigation, his interpretation of the ethics of scholarship is almost equally perplexing.

In practice, then, if not in theory, Professor Hook's procedure, which he recommends for general adoption in the defense of academic freedom and integrity, seems to consist in casting at those who disagree with him not only the first stone, but any others that come to hand, without too careful a consideration as to where he picked them up. This is accepted procedure in partisan electioneering and in the vituperative bickerings of rival Marxist sects. For the discovery and teaching of truth, however, it has

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never proved a reliable or rewarding method. To fasten it upon our colleges in the name of academic integrity would be a grave disservice to the very cause it is supposed to serve.

ARTHUR E. MURPHY

Cornell University

Professor Hook Replies

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

My contention against Dr. Lynd is that in her discussion of the University of Washington cases she departed from accepted canons of scholarship. Her rejoinder does not refute the contention. The issue is not Mr. Canwell, for whom I hold no brief whatsoever. Nor is it the Legislature's investigation of the University of Washington. I am opposed to all investigations of the loyalty of teaching faculties and approve no more of the methods of the Canwell Committee than of the Dies Committee. The issue, I repeat, is the character of Dr. Lynd's procedures in reporting specific items of evidence. And I made clear I was not referring to "deliberate duplicity."

1. The character of Dr. Lynd's procedure in reporting the shocking sentence she attributed to Mr. Canwell may perhaps be made clearer if we ask what her reactions would be if a comparable damaging and reprehensible statement were publicly attributed to a Communist on the basis of *private* correspondence by an unrevealed person or persons. It is safe to say that Dr. Lynd would indignantly demand that the accused be confronted by his accusers, that the latter come out of hiding and face public examination and questioning.

Dr. Lynd is sensitive to safeguards when Communists are involved—and properly so. This explains, perhaps, why she made no reference to the sworn public statement of a Washington attorney before the Legislative Committee that his son, while a student at the University, had been indoctrinated by one of the dismissed teachers into Communism, influenced to leave his father's home and join the Communist party, and set on a course which ended in enlistment in a Communist contingent for action in Spain from which he never returned. Dr. Lynd did not cite this and other public testimony, presumably because the persons accused did not accept the opportunity to testify before the Committee. She leans over backward in not citing the *public* evidence given against the accused while introducing as conclusive *private* evidence against the accusers. Why does Dr. Lynd apply one rule to Communists and another to those who are opposed to them? This is the question to which Dr. Lynd should have addressed herself.

The additional evidence she *now* presents does not justify citing private testimony on so grave a matter. By her own account the newspapers did carry stories of Mr. Canwell's speech but neither quoted the statement nor attributed the particular sentiment to him. Despite this Dr. Lynd contends that there is "a presumption in favor of the greater reliability" of the report sent to her by a teacher in Cheney. The grounds she offers are completely irrelevant —a sentence paralleling one from a *different* speech by Mr. Canwell on *another* subject, and a "more careful" version of another sentence not related to the damning quotation in question.

In face of the fact that hundreds of teachers in Washington have spoken out openly and critically against the action of the University, her explanation of her refusal to disclose her sources—persons who presumably reported merely what they heard in a speech by an ex-legislator—is not convincing. How does she know they are telling the truth? If we open the door to charges made privately by undisclosed persons, no one is safe from the wildest and most irresponsible accusations.

Finally, why did not Dr. Lynd report Mr. Canwell's emphatic disavowal of the statement attributed to him so that her readers would be informed of it? And if her collaborators concealed this from her, why did she make no effort to confirm the statement with Mr. Canwell himself? *This does not mean that Mr. Canwell's disavowal should be accepted as true, but at the least it should have been reported.*

2. In her original discussion Dr. Lynd presented Professor Winther's testimony as if it were merely an imaginative treatment of facts. She did not quote, as she now does, his statement that his article was based on non-imagined facts. In addition, her article ignores all the evidence that has come to light, even when it is documentary, which bears on the instructions issued to members of the Communist party about indoctrinating the party line in classes, capturing departments, and fulfilling their tasks as "professional revolutionists."

3. It is one thing to recognize the general truth that political and financial pressures operate on public educational institutions. It is illegitimate, however, to deduce from this, in the absence of additional particular evidence, that an appropriation of $25,000,000 for a medical school influenced *certain specifically named individuals*, President Allen and the Regents, unjustifiably to deprive innocent teachers of their posts. Dr. Lynd now tells us that such evidence exists known to others. She was and is derelict in not telling us what this evidence is and who has it. If this evidence is valid, the individuals

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mentioned are not "well-intentioned." They should be dismissed from public and academic life.

4. Dr. Lynd suggests that I am applying the term "fellow-traveler" to those who are critical of the decision taken in the University of Washington case. That this is false is evident from my explicit declaration that genuine liberals may disagree about the wisdom of this decision. If Dr. Lynd has taken the same position publicly in condemning the Communist party as the professors who disapproved the dismissal of their colleagues, if she has ever protested in behalf of the victims of Communism anywhere in the same way as she defends the rights of Communists here, it has escaped my notice. What has not escaped my notice is her signature on a petition sponsored by such a Communist-front organization as the National Federation for Constitutional Liberties (see *Daily Worker,* December 19, 1940, page 5, col. 5) and her support of the Fourth Congress of the League of American Writers on June 6, 1941, which accused the Roosevelt administration of leading the country to war and fascism, characterized the struggle against Hitler as an "imperialist war," and approved the American Peace Mobilization and its picketing of the White House. Last spring she was a sponsor of the Communist-controlled Waldorf Conference for World Peace.

5. Dr. Lynd taxes me with inconsistency in advocating that the faculty alone should administer the rules against subversion of the educational process and at the same time upholding the action of the President and Board of Regents in acting contrary to the recommendation of a majority of the Faculty Committee on Tenure at the University of Washington. The plain fact is that until now I have never discussed the merits of the specific decision at the University of Washington but only the general principle whether membership in the Communist party should be considered *prima facie* evidence of unfitness to teach.

My position is based on the view that freedom of inquiry involves the acceptance of certain standards of professional ethics, one of which is well stated by the New School for Social Research: "The New School in its concern for academic freedom and responsibility has declared the policy that no faculty member may belong to any political party or group which asserts the right to dictate in matters of science or scientific opinion." The evidence shows that the Communist party is such a group. Rules, however, must be administered not blindly or automatically but with an eye to the specific situation. But the rules should be openly stated, and applied by faculty committees. That is all I have ever contended.

It is possible both to agree with this policy and to hold that since the *existing* tenure rules at the University of Washington did not make the policy explicit, the dismissals were unjustified. This is actually the position of a majority of the Tenure Committee, which recommends the revision of the tenure rules along the policy lines I have advocated.

Whoever rejects the policy as expressed above weakens, in my opinion, the traditions of academic freedom. Whoever rejects the statement of fact about the Communist party is unaware of its nature. Dr. Lynd apparently rejects both. That is her privilege. But whether we accept or reject them, whether we are accusing members of the Communist party or their accusers, we should not cite as evidence private affidavits of unnamed persons. It is my belief that Dr. Lynd would agree if such affidavits were directed against members of the Communist party.

* * *

I AGREE with Professor Murphy that a tree should be judged by its fruits. But it must be its own fruit, and not foreign fruit artfully hung upon its branches, which should provide the test.

1. The main identifying characteristic of a "fellow-traveler" is membership in, and support of, a Communist-front organization. I do not know whether Professor Murphy is aware of the existence of such organizations. The leaders of the Communist movement make no bones about it. Kuusinen, the Secretary of the Comintern, wrote in the *American Communist* (May 1931): "We must create a whole solar system of organizations and smaller committees around the Communist party, so to speak, smaller organizations working actually under the influence of our party." There are similar and more recent declarations by Browder and Foster. Certain well-known criteria for identifying such organizations are used: content analysis of their literature, office personnel, attitude of the party press towards them, etc., etc.

Working in complete independence of the government, the Committee for Cultural Freedom, organized in 1939 to combat *all* forms of totalitarianism, published two long lists of front organizations—one fascist, one Communist. As Chairman of its Executive Committee, I took personal responsibility for their accuracy and checked carefully the available data. Even before then I had studied the composition of the groups set up by the Communist party to discredit the Commission of Inquiry into the Moscow Trials. Ever since, other interests permitting, I have periodically continued these studies. And when I wrote in COMMENTARY that "to

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this day" the largest group of fellow-travelers is to be found in academic circles, I was referring mainly to my own statistical studies. I will give three illustrations.

When the Committee for Cultural Freedom was organized, the American Council on Soviet Relations, originally set up by the Communist party, published a denunciation of the Committee on August 14, 1939, branding as a falsehood the Committee's reference to the Soviet Union as a totalitarian state, and hailing Stalin's Russia as a consistent bulwark against war and aggression. It charged that the organizers of the Committee (John Dewey, Horace Kallen, Norman Thomas, and other well-known liberals) were "Fascists and allies of Fascists." Of the 175 names appended to this declaration, some forty-odd were academic people (cf. my "Academic Freedom and the Trojan Horse in American Education," *AAUP Bulletin*, 1940). On November 20, 1939, John Dewey, as Chairman, sent a personal letter to all those who had signed this denunciation, inquiring whether in the light of the Nazi-Soviet pact, they would reconsider their aspersions on the Committee. A few scattered replies were received: only two signers expressed a change of sentiment.

Last March the Waldorf Conference for World Peace, a direct outgrowth of the Communist-organized Wroclaw Peace Conference of August 1948 and precursor of the Communist Paris World Peace Conference of May 1949, issued its sponsoring list of 559 on the opening day. Of these more than 110 were academic persons. Most of them had been circularized by Americans for Intellectual Freedom, which cited the evidence that the Waldorf Conference was Communist-controlled. Eliminating those academic sponsors who had never been known before to support a Communist front and those who had at any time publicly condemned Soviet terrorism, the largest single group were still the academic fellow-travelers.

My last check was made on the Bill of Rights Conference meeting in New York in July, the month I wrote my recent article, which unanimously opposed the Communist conspiracy trial, unanimously demanded the repeal of the Smith Act, and all but unanimously rejected a resolution calling for the restoration of civil liberties to Trotskyites convicted under the very same Smith Act in 1940. (From the New York *Times* of July 18: "In speaking for denial of civil liberties to the Socialist Workers Party, Mr. Robeson asked the Conference: 'Would you give civil rights to the Ku Klux Klan?' 'No,' chorused the delegates.") Of the twelve members of the initiating committee for the Bill of Rights Conference, five were professors. Of approximately 360 sponsors, almost 70 were from colleges. Eliminating the newly trapped, they were still the largest single group.

The statistical facts are unfortunate but true. However, most fellow-travelers are not really Communists by conviction or even Marxists, as I explained in my article. And the greatest care must be taken in identifying any particular individual as a fellow-traveler, for front affiliations, in addition to their number, have different relative weights depending on how open the party control or party line is.

Front organizations are of enormous usefulness to the Communist party. If it is to survive, it is safe to predict that the party will have to rely on these fronts more and more. The sledding, however, will be harder in the future. One of their special purposes is to attack groups and individuals on the Left who are hostile to Communism. No weapon in the arsenal of character assassination is left unused. In Professor Murphy's eyes, apparently, to imply that a colleague is "fascist," is one thing—nothing. But to criticize fellow-travelers who are willing dupes of a movement which threatens the whole structure of free society is to imperil academic freedom. On page 338 of my article I gave eight type-illustrations of fellow-traveling which deserve criticism. The reader can judge for himself by whom the integrities of academic freedom are threatened—by these individuals or their critics.

2. Academic fellow-travelers *do* exist whether Professor Murphy knows it or not. Many ill-considered and dangerous proposals have been made to deal with them, and I have opposed administrative measures of any kind in such situations. In this connection I endorsed President Conant's view that a systematic study of the ideologies and practices of democracy and Communism be incorporated in the curriculum. The course of study I described was so extensive, it could hardly be introduced *ad hoc*. And it was to prevent interpretation of it as a "cold war" course that I wrote: "We must hasten to add—to safeguard against misunderstanding—that it cannot be the only subject of curricular emphasis. More important still, democracy is to be studied not as a conflicting ideology in a war but as a way of life to be independently explored, developed, and criticized in relation to the problems of contemporary society." I now see there is no safeguarding oneself against the will to misunderstand.

That Professor Murphy doubts my qualifications to give such a course is not a fatal difficulty or an argument against its desirability. Better instruction is undoubtedly available. My hope was and is that "as a by-product" (page 335) of such serious study, information would be acquired about the nature and ramifications of the Communist movement.

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3. In one of his remarks Professor Murphy—unwittingly I hope—amalgamates my criticism of Dr. Meiklejohn with my criticism of fellow-travelers. To remove any possibility of doubt on this score, let me emphasize as strongly as I can that I have never even dreamed of criticizing Dr. Meiklejohn as a fellow-traveler. I have criticized only his arguments on a matter of great importance. He holds that those who join and remain members of the Communist party, despite the fact that their ideas shift as the policies of the party shift, "are moved by a passionate determination to follow the truth where it seems to lead." I may have been mistaken in my analysis and criticisms of this position. Professor Murphy would have done better to point out such defects rather than to imply that all I was trying to do was to discredit a critic of the decision at the University of Washington and "to wage war" on "a fine and courageous teacher." He even finds it suspicious that I selected for criticism the strongest and most effectively made case in behalf of the opposing view. Would it have been more convincing evidence of good faith if I had selected the *weakest* and least effectively made case on the other side?

4. I have already considered some of Professor Murphy's strictures on my criticism of Dr. Lynd's procedure in my letter above. He elaborately misses some of the main points involved. I shall try to make these explicit.

In her article, Dr. Lynd wrote: "The kind of thinking that supports the decision of the Regents is suggested by the fact that T. V. Smith, as a Congressman from Illinois, voted in January, 1940, for a continuation of the Dies Committee and that Albert F. Canwell, speaking at Cheney, Washington, on October 6, 1948, said: 'If someone insists that there is discrimination against Negroes in this country, or that there is inequality of wealth, there is every reason to believe that person is a Communist.'" (Professor T. V. Smith had defended the decision.)

(a) If anything expresses a fascist sentiment, it is the sentence attributed to Mr. Canwell. If this is the kind of thinking that supports the decision, then not only the Regents, President Allen, the minority of the faculty committee, and Professor Smith are being smeared by innuendo, but all of Dr. Lynd's colleagues who disagree with her about the wisdom of the decision. It is significant that Professor Murphy finds nothing offensive in *this* kind of criticism of his fellow scholars.

(b) Nowhere did I pass a judgment on the truth or falsity of the report of Dr. Lynd's informants or on Mr. Canwell's denial. I would no more do this than I would pass judgment on the truth of charges of membership in the Communist party based on private affidavits by undisclosed persons. That a person is capable of doing something is no evidence that he actually did it. It is to the use of this kind of testimony I object *whether made by a House Committee or by individuals—and no matter what the nature of the charge.*

(c) It was bad enough to use this kind of testimony, but if it was going to be used it should have been put into the text so everybody would see at once on what it was based. Everybody is astute enough to find a footnote but not everybody is interested enough to look for it.

(d) I am happy to learn about Professor Rader's vindication and hope that those who bore false witness against him will be punished. I for one never believed the charge made against him, since it was denied by former members of the Communist party unit at the University of Washington. But what Professor Murphy does not see is that precisely because the accusations against Professor Rader were not based on private or anonymous affidavits he *could* win vindication.

Professor Murphy seems to regard these questions of procedure, on which so much of liberal civilization rests, as a small thing. But out of violations of such small things much worse can grow.

SIDNEY HOOK

New York University

On "Commentary"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

I am delighted with the October issue of COMMENTARY. It seems to me that your magazine has clearly taken the lead in creative publications in this country. For some time I belonged among your non-Jewish readers who believed that there were serious disadvantages to the whole venture. It has been the sheer high quality of three-fourths of your articles which has forced a change of opinion. I am now convinced that many Gentile readers, like myself, have already gained a new appreciation of the richness of Jewish contributions to the American heritage, past and contemporary.

Particularly enlightening has been your symposium on "The Jewish Writer and the English Literary Tradition." Again, on first reading the question posed, I doubted whether the results would be desirable. But the unflinching honesty and psychological penetration of nearly all the respondents won the day and more than justified the venture. One further comment: Norbert Muhlen's report on "The Shooting on the Moehlstrasse" is surely a model of objective writing on a difficult question. He has expressed the curiously ambivalent attitude of postwar Germans toward the Jews better than

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anyone yet. Knowing the *Süddeutsche Zeitung* and the general situation in Munich, I had been thoroughly mystified by the newspaper reports of this ugly affair.

Clearly the circulation of COMMENTARY must be made to grow.

J. GLENN GRAY

Colorado College
Colorado Springs

On "Punishment Without Crime"

TO THE EDITOR OF COMMENTARY:

S. Andhil Fineberg's handbook on combating prejudice, *Punishment Without Crime*, seemed to me a far more impressive and useful book than your reviewer Granville Hicks found it. Apparently I am in good company, as witness the following excerpts from the really exciting reviews that appeared all over the country:

New York *Times*, R. L. Duffus: "The whole drive of this excellent book is toward a more intelligent approach to democracy.... The emphasis is positive.... Dr. Fineberg writes earnestly and interestingly.... His case illustrations are good." Chicago *Tribune*, Wilton Krogman: "*Punishment Without Crime* is not special pleading. It is a sober, dignified demand to make democracy live for each one of our 150 millions. It is a social conscience at its best and highest." Philadelphia *Inquirer*, William Jefferys: "*Punishment Without Crime* is an oasis in the wilderness of technical treatises and impassioned imprecations that have sprung up so abundantly along the path of community relations work. It simplifies without oversimplifying. It brings order out of chaos. And it is readable."

New York *Herald Tribune*, Frances Witherspoon: "An admirable book—readable, concrete, idealistic." St. Louis *Post Dispatch*, James Lawrence: "As for the nature of prejudice, the graphic lesson of the book is that intolerance has no friends. It is not selective. When a climate of hatred spreads its victims may be found anywhere, and to oppressors as well as oppressed the cost of hate is high. But many books have been written against prejudice. Almost none have analyzed what can be done about it. This is the practical value of *Punishment Without Crime*, which commends it to any bookshelf."

Public Opinion Quarterly: "Popular and readable account of the way in which prejudice manifests itself and the way in which the individual citizen can combat it. The book is divided into four parts: the present situation, the areas in which discrimination is encountered, organized and unorganized prejudiced individuals, and the forces working against prejudice and how they can be strengthened. Includes wealth of concrete illustrative instances." *Library Journal*, Jesse E. Cross: "An outstanding book on diagnosing and combating racial and religious group prejudice.... Well planned, interestingly and forcefully written. ... It carries conviction, and should help to free many from the common dilemma that in disliking individuals they are led to stereotype, as the target of prejudice, the entire group.... Highly recommended for all libraries." *New York State Library*: "Forthright, concrete treatment of racial and religious prejudice, citing actual cases and effective methods for individual and group action against intolerance." Louisville *Courier-Journal*, Joseph Landau: "For the citizen interested in fighting prejudice, for the social worker, for the man who is the victim and for the man who up to now has stood helplessly by, *Punishment Without Crime* is just the book.... It is thoughtful, readable work dedicated to the noblest of ideas."

There are ever so many more. I write this letter in the hope that COMMENTARY's readers will be encouraged to become acquainted with Dr. Fineberg's book which otherwise they might forego, and thus miss an illuminating and profitable guide to the effective solution of everyday problems in the field of inter-group relations and tensions.

MILTON WEILL

New York City

The Stuyvesant Town Case

TO THE EDITOR OF COMENTARY:

In my article last month on "Stuyvesant Town's Threat to Our Liberties," I omitted the fact that the case was initiated and is being taken to the Supreme Court of the United States by the American Jewish Congress, the American Civil Liberties Union, and the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. I would appreciate your publishing this correction. (Since the article was published the American Jewish Committee and the B'nai B'rith Anti-Defamation League have entered the case *amicus curiae*.)

CHARLES ABRAMS

New York City

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BOOKS IN REVIEW

Has America a Ruling Class?

STRATEGY FOR LIBERALS: THE POLITICS OF THE MIXED ECONOMY. By IRWIN ROSS. Harper. 211 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by DANIEL BELL

IT IS a singular commentary on the state of American political thinking that in almost two decades no new "names" have come to the fore among left-wing and liberal thinkers. The political intelligentsia that writes the books and stirs discussion is still composed almost exclusively of men who became established in the late 1920's and early 1930's, at relatively young ages, and who today are in their middle or late forties. Seemingly, a generation has been lost. This picture is even more striking, considering the revolution that has taken place in economic thought in the last ten years, and with it, the development of a host of young and talented, albeit technical, economists.

A number of explanations can be advanced for the failure of first-rate political minds to emerge: many of the young men were drawn into New Deal administrative work; a number were rendered impotent by the Communists; the predictions of the Left, warning of native fascism, were sour; the fear by liberals of the loss of civil liberties during the war proved, on the whole, groundless, and thus their theoretical base was rendered insecure. Except for the brilliant but warped *Managerial Revolution* of James Burnham, the neo-Paretoian analysis of Lasswell, and the abortive revival of Randolph Bourne on the eve of the war, the major works reflective of "the revolution of our times" were the glassy tracts of Max Lerner and Harold J. Laski. In a sense, the real political response to the age was the revival of interest in the "élite theorists," the re-reading of Machiavelli and Hobbes, and the acceptance of the oblique political theology of Reinhold Niebuhr, with its strictures against utopianism.

These, then, have been fallow years. But a new crop of publicists is beginning to emerge. It is more than a coincidence of publishing that in recent months there appeared books by Arthur Schlesinger Jr., Peter Viereck, and Irwin Ross, all of which treat of the same central problem of welfare and freedom. Each of these men is just over thirty; they are the harbingers of a new political generation.

TAKEN as a phenomenon, perhaps the most authentic representative of the group is Irwin Ross. Ross is a product of the "youth movement," that doll's house of revolution, where young Socialists, Communists, and liberals locked in mimetic combat, debating ferociously the road to power. His book reflects the education of a generation that went to college in the days of the Popular Front, learned the organizational logic of Communist control in the American Student Union and the American Youth Congress, was disillusioned ideologically and morally by the Stalin-Hitler pact, cast its first vote for Franklin D. Roosevelt in 1940, accepted quite soberly its tasks in the war, and is today "liberal without tears." What are the fruits of this education?

Ross writes a "strategy for liberals," and his arguments can be compressed without logical violence into simple schematic form:

The labor and liberal movements (e.g. Americans for Democratic Action) are not setting their sights high enough. The short-range goals of housing, medical care, etc., are important, but these do not meet the major challenge, the inherent instability of our economic system. When the blow comes, the liberals must be prepared with a program which can offer a thoroughgoing solution and is dramatic enough to appeal to the restless masses.

Such a program is the "mixed economy." The mixed economy means the socialization only of the giant corporations whose monopolistic practices restrict production and whose investment decisions affect the level of economic activity. Other sectors of the economy, particularly service and distribution, would be left "free." The moral case for such a program is that it provides for a flexible "welfare state" with a minimum of governmental bureaucracy; the economic case

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is that government control of key decisions can guarantee full employment; the political case rests upon the proposition that the power of big business or entrenched wealth to dominate Congress and sabotage the economy would be broken.

Such far-reaching social change, however, may provoke a reaction on the part of big business. The European debacle indicates that the "conservative business group" will engage in various forms of sabotage ranging from a sit-down strike of capital to the fostering of "an indigenously fascist system . . . [or] the ultimate sanction which reaction can invoke against a popularly elected radical administration: a military coup." Ramsay MacDonald, Manuel Azaña, and Léon Blum were not prepared. Liberals must learn from their mistakes.

THE tone throughout emphasizes the mood—tough-minded, realistic, hard-headed. The emphasis is on the concrete steps that have to be taken and the concrete measures that have to be advanced. Mr. Ross has read well among the younger economists and his chapters on the economic case for a mixed economy is an excellently popularized (but not vulgarized) rendering of Keynesian thinking.

The crucial question is, however: What is the social theory implicit in the book? What has Ross himself learned over the decade?

If any word has been learned well, it is *power*. Because the human appetite is for power, power must be curbed, hence the stress on the mixed economy rather than socialism; in this respect the lesson of Russia has been assimilated. But the absorption with the concept of naked power has its drawbacks as well. All significant political motives become reduced to *power drives*, a slippery term which is as rubbery as "pleasure and pain," and which leads to too easy formulation. Since power is so tempting, human beings will not give it up. When their power is threatened, they will not give it up easily. Hence, almost like Newton's law of motion, an energetic action will necessarily bring a vigorous reaction.

While such generalizations on power may be true regarding individuals, it is another matter to describe an intricate and complex social process, in which many interests clash and jockey for strategic position, in terms of these psychological motives. It can only be done by personifying political concepts and talking of "big business" or "Wall Street" as single, real entities. And that is, unfortunately, what Ross does.

In this respect Ross still bears, like the mark of Cain, the intellectual curse of a generation—a vulgarized Marxism (Marx himself challenged it in his annihilation of Bentham's hedonism) which reduces social action to a mechanical economic determinism, and in which the most significant contribution of Marx's thought, his analysis of the nature of ideology, is lost.

Men act, and in a sense need to act (a significant fact in its own terms), on a moral plane. And they seek to justify their action (often without hypocrisy) in terms of some moral purpose. Such interplay of particular interests and general ideas makes up an ideology. The real problem of materialistic analysis, as Sidney Hook once pointed out, is to show "the *specific* mechanisms by which economic conditions influence habits and motives of classes, granted that individuals are actuated by motives that are not always a function of individual self-interest." And conversely, since classes are composed of individuals, to show "how class interests are furthered by the non-economic motives of individuals."

Within the frame of his analysis, Ross has failed to attempt the answer. Even if he did, however, it is still questionable whether his type of analysis, even if it used Marxian categories in their fullest and richest sense, can provide more than a partial (and hence, if taken for the whole, a distorted) view of American society.

In concrete terms, is the action he predicts of the American capitalist an integral response to his *class role* as capitalist, or is the response likely to be diverse, with some men acquiescing to the democratic process and others resorting to force to retain their own power? What degree of real predictability is possible? Can we say that the American capitalist, without the social cement of a past, without a set of distinctive manners and morals, or a distinctive ideology (which is only now being fashioned), operates in the deliberate manner that traditional Marxist theory ascribes to the capitalist class?

The issue can be joined by raising three questions, and, within the limits of space, sketching the outline of a tentative answer. In the process, I may at times be forcing Ross's position to the extreme, but one has to explore the limits of a theory in order to understand it. The three problems are: (1) Is America made in Europe's image? (2) Is there a ruling class in the United States? (3) Who is the enemy?

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IT IS quite significant that the major evidence Ross offers for the crucial thesis of the book, the inevitable hard-jawed attitude of "big business," is the European experience. Why, however, no detailed examination of the American past? Why the assumption that American society must recapitulate the European drama?

The most obvious fact about America is the tremendous range and diversity of its people and their interests. Political power in America has always been based on the shifting sands of coalition in which interests are rarely explicitly defined. The unique and central figure of the American scene is not the ideologue but the politician, and in modern political life there have been only two national political "bosses," in the explicit sense of the term, who have been able to put across a coherent slate of proposals or unmistakably wield an iron hand—one was Mark Hanna, the other Franklin D. Roosevelt; and in both cases it was not for long.

Could a demagogue like Hitler weld together these diverse forces, and impose an arbitrary rule on America? Such a prospect seems unlikely. Morever, it implies that American businessmen, themselves restless for fifteen years with the whittling away of their managerial authority, would welcome some over-all force which would have power over themselves as well. Some individuals probably would gamble for a seat of governmental power and might finance such fascist movements. But the lure in such cases is no longer the preservation of the capitalist system as a system but their own individual power, power which can be lost quite easily in the bureaucratic intrigues of court politics. But how, then, can one talk of "business" as a whole?

IS THERE a ruling class in America? Such a question implies that there is a coherent *community* of interest among defined groups, and further implies a *continuity* of interest. Of course there are strong interest groups in the United States, the strongest of which are business combinations which seek to influence policy by lobbying, by propaganda, and other devices. But this is a far cry from a cohesive class tied together by status, or family ties, or common manners, or legal property ties, which acts to sustain a *mode* of power.

From a historical point of view the American social structure, paradoxically, has become increasingly amorphous, while corporate control has become increasingly bureaucratized or "managerialized." There is a multiplication of élites but within each group decisions are made increasingly in the more limited terms of the immediate needs of the group. There are always temporary and partial coalitions of power, but to derive from this a theory of the increasingly congealed nature of class power is to misread the drift of a technological and managerial society. This is not to imply that American class structure is growing freer; in many respects it seems to be growing more rigid. What is true is that the area of manipulation is becoming so vast and the sources of authority so diverse that a uniform pattern of action becomes increasingly difficult to maintain.

Why then the idea of a "ruling class"? As David Riesman has pointed out, "There is an almost animistic feeling that since things run, somebody runs them." In the immediate sense somebody does run things, but this somebody himself is part of a larger system of action. It was one of the major contributions of Marx to demonstrate how a social system operates independently of the will of individuals, and in some sense molds them; it is the contribution of his vulgarizers to create bogeymen.

WHO, then, is the Enemy? The problem of the American economy is the power of monopolistic enterprises to create drags on economic development. The problem of American culture is the standardization of mind and taste induced by mass-consumption markets. The problem of American *politics* is (metaphorically) the small-town mentality.

Curiously, this last is a subject which receives no attention from Ross, or from other recent writers on the problem of liberal politics. Given the type of "army game" which is characteristic of American life, the frustrations and insecurities of living press most severely on the small-town person. (And usually every large American city is no more than a collection of small towns.) The pressures of conformity squeeze harder on the lower-middle class than any other social group, and leave it no area of release, neither the explosive behavior possible for lower-class individuals, nor the relaxed hedonism for upper-class individuals. Crabbed, frightened by change, suspicious of ideas, these men, like Wherry and Rankin, create a new species of know-nothingism. Narrowness, anti-intellectualism, and prejudice find their greatest *articulation* in the small-town mind and particularly his broker, the small-town lawyer. If, as I think

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will happen, American society grows increasingly amorphous and undifferentiated, his sense of panic will rise, his readiness to violence grow all the greater.

Two Latter-day Gospels

MARY. By SHOLEM ASCH. Translated by Leo Steinberg. Putnam. 436 pp. $3.50.

WHY JESUS DIED. By PIERRE VAN PAASSEN. Dial. 283 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by SHOLOM J. KAHN

THE third novel which Sholem Asch has devoted to the story of the birth of Christianity is a document which, at the very least, has the fascination of complexity. But in the worlds of art and religion, unlike that of biology, no special virtue adheres to the hybrid.

Considered merely as a novel, this volume is composed of many diverse elements which simply fail to jell into any aesthetic unity. One of the reasons for this failure may be that it was produced over a long span of years, having been first conceived some forty years ago and then set aside for the writing of *The Nazarene* and *The Apostle*. The former attempted the useful task of presenting the story of Jesus from three points of view—those of the Romans, the Pharisees, and Jesus himself—and its recreation of the mature Yeshua was much more successful than the shadowy figure who appears in Part Three of *Mary*. *The Apostle*, despite a vast historic canvas which covered the entire ancient world, was unified by the figure of Paul and the central theme of the struggle between paganism and Christianity.

This most recent attempt, however, reads somewhat like a selection of familiar themes from Asch's former works. The story is frequently interrupted for passages of historical analysis, and even for straight preaching. A curious effect of anachronism is produced when we realize how closely the scenes from Yeshua's childhood resemble descriptions of scenes in the Polish *cheder* of a generation ago; and the wedding at Cana, which the puzzled New York *Times* reviewer described as "more or less of an orgy," is merely an old-fashioned Hasidic wedding.

Painstaking realism alternates with fairly good imitations of New Testament parables, with pedantic lessons on Jewish customs, with poetic allegory and strained descriptions of miracles. Nor is the effect of disunity lessened by a translation whose diction passes blithely from the archaic ("chine," "gravid," "mixen," "reboant") to the modern ("empathy") and colloquial. Though some attempt is made to have the theme of Miriam and her son carry the thread of the story, the total effect remains one of pastiche.

OBVIOUSLY Sholem Asch is attempting to write something more than a novel and might prefer that his work be judged by other than "merely aesthetic" standards. Yet his failure as an artist bears a direct relation to his intellectual confusions. It is because we are so frequently distracted by anachronisms and incongruities that this volume suffers seriously as a re-creation of history by comparison with its more sweeping predecessors, and the little village of Nazareth comes alive only sporadically, if at all.

Asch accepts most of the Catholic dogmas (such as the virgin birth, the holy ghost, and the resurrection) as historical, and we must, in all charity, assume that he believes them to be such. That is, probably, more a matter of faith than of objective evidence; to quarrel with him on that score would be futile. But to make of Yeshua an "apostle to the Gentiles" is to distort history, indeed, and to undermine the essentially sound picture (if I remember it correctly) presented in *The Apostle*.

It is historically false to say that "Israel's yearning was not for a national hero, but for a universal saviour." Galilee is presented as peopled with idolatrous Gentiles, and all through his education Yeshua is filled with an ardent desire to convert the heathens. Shades of Saint Paul! Most historians are agreed that the northern hills were rather a center of intense Jewish nationalism; and Jesus's bid for the messianic role and his defeat was an internal Jewish conflict, with important consequences vis-à-vis the Romans, of course. In brief, the evidence seems to indicate that Jesus himself was relatively indifferent to the lot of the Gentiles.

SUCH a distortion—not to mention the unusual liberty he takes in calling a book about "Miriam, daughter of Hanan," *Mary*: the latter name never occurs in its pages—can only be understood (though not forgiven) as a consequence of Asch's own "messianic" conviction that he has a message of great importance for our trou-

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bled world. However, this book will probably prove to be even less successful as a sermon than as a novel or as history. I take it that his central motivation throughout has been to demonstrate the essential unity of the Jewish and Christian faiths. But he has confused abstract moral principles—where a large measure of unity is indeed possible—with the religious myths in which they are embodied, which are inevitably discrete.

There is quite a difference between placing "Jesus and the Nazarene movement . . . where they properly belong: in the spiritual history of Judaism" (Buber)—as Klausner, Kaufman, and others have succeeded in doing—and trying to destroy the very real differences between Judaism and Christianity. For Judaism, Jesus has always been one among a number of false messiahs; and its messianic concept is substantially different from that of Catholic Christianity. Jew and Christian will not come to realize that they have "One Destiny"—as, indeed, they do—by appropriating one another's myths, but by an honest recognition of differences, and by the establishment of a world order in which various religions can live harmoniously side by side.

THE contrast between Sholem Asch, the Jew turned "Christian," and Mr. Van Paassen, the liberal Unitarian Christian who has so ardently espoused Jewish causes, is ironical, of course, but not so profound as it may appear to be on the surface. Like Asch, Van Paassen has an ax to grind.

Despite an impressive bibliography and much display of "higher criticism" learning, *Why Jesus Died* makes no pretense at being a life of Jesus. A popularization—in the reportorial style which has made best-sellers out of some of its author's other books—of some of the conclusions reached by various historical scholars, its central motivation is to explain, and thus dispel, the myth that the Jews were primarily responsible for the death of Jesus.

But, if Asch has confused his myths, Van Paassen, in his search for historic justice, inadvertently creates new and perhaps inferior myths of his own. His account is heavily naturalistic, explaining visions as "eidatic imagery," the fact that Jesus's "sweat was as it were great drops of blood falling down to the ground" (Luke 22:44) as "an attack of hematidrosis," and so forth.

The effect of all this is to reduce Jesus to a good-natured and confused, rather than tragic, young man, and to leave the reader wondering why this pathetic figure had the impact on history which he did.

Advertised as "a totally new but factual account," this is neither, since it makes no fresh contributions to serious scholarship and displays uneven judgment in its choice of experts to quote. Thus, the reconstruction in Part Two of Jesus's experiences in Jerusalem is poorly documented and unconvincing; leaning heavily on Robert Eisler's speculative *The Messiah Jesus* and supplemented by liberal doses of Van Paassen's turgid fictionalizing, it is more fancy than fact. A concluding sermon on "The Eternal Gospel" reveals an earnest man of good will, however, and, where the limitations of his imagination are less likely to betray him, as in treatments of historical backgrounds and movements, his personalized summaries are often sound.

I feel more comfortable with Pierre van Paassen's Christianity than with Sholem Asch's "Judaism." First, I know what he is; and second, while he shares with Asch the laudable purpose of clarifying an issue whose consequences in persecution have darkened the pages of European history, his point of view is, by comparison, consistent and clear, and keeps the door open for further study and discussion. Nevertheless, his work remains essentially that of a warm-hearted journalist, and, in both these books, clarity of vision has been sacrificed to the preaching of a gospel.

Three Poets

POEMS, 1928-1948. By EDOUARD RODITI. New Directions. 151 pp. $2.00.

THE ROCKING CHAIR AND OTHER POEMS. By A. M. KLEIN. Toronto, The Ryerson Press. 56 pp. $2.25.

POEMS. By DAVID IGNATOW. Illinois, The Decker Press. 99 pp. $2.50.

Reviewed by NEIL WEISS

HERE are three poets of middling merit who, in another time, when poets and poetry were not regarded as curious atavisms, might be dismissed as "minor." However, given the perplexities that confront the poet today—a mythmaker scratching his head in front of an amazingly efficient machine, the gods having fled—it is better perhaps to approach him with

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something like the respect and awe once reserved for the dervish and anchorite.

Without much to hang on to, the poet often is reduced to embracing himself. As does Edouard Roditi, who announces in his preface that "among British and American poets of my generation, I remain, of course, my favorite poet." Why that "of course" is stuck in, it is hard to say. Perhaps Roditi means that every poet, automatically and *ipso jure,* must "believe in" his own work. If so, that is a commonplace. But if he really does prefer his own work to that of any number of better poets around, that might give us a handhold in the attempt to understand Roditi's failure to develop a significant form of his own. His poems show not much development since he was *transition*'s youngest contributor at the age of sixteen, when he was embarrassed before his equal facility in French and English, and Eliot and Spender urged him "to concentrate on one language."

THERE are only five poems in French in this volume of one hundred and fifty pages; so it is difficult, even with a greater knowledge of the language than I possess, to criticize Roditi's early work in French—except, possibly, to agree, when he states in his preface that perhaps Eliot and Spender were "tactfully suggesting that I abide by French." For his English poems are too often undistinguished and platitudinously bare, employing prose rhythms, but making no discoveries of form and music so necessary to keep this modern form from collapsing into banality and mere reportage. Here is a stanza of Roditi at his worst:

Not victim of the times but of your own
contemporaries, fellow-men who never saw
the light for which you feverishly fought
in their surrounding gloom that slowly
encroached
on your jealously guarded peak of ideals. . . .

There is not much in the above stanza that can be called poetry. The worst of it is not that the thought is commonplace, but that it has not been processed as poetry. It is merely given, undigested, uncompressed, slapped on the table as so much raw newsprint, with none of that quick light of phrase and insight which denotes the gain of knowledge through poetry. Here, for contrast, is a stanza from W. C. Williams that says something like what Roditi is trying to say (from *Paterson*—Book 1), but Williams lifts it up, dripping—

Pithy philosophies of
daily exits and entrances, with books
propping up one end of the shaky table—
The vague accuracies of events dancing two
and two with language which they
forever surpass—and dawns
tangled in darkness—

When Roditi, at his best, defines himself against the city we get this tough modern music:

The Lorelei with the spaghetti hair
Queens it at the raw-meat piano

And in his "Three Hebrew Elegies" he manages a bit of the grave sweetness necessary to a treatment of Genesis as love—the stepping-down of something from nothing, out of the gestation of abstract love; the "sacred problem/of the gift, the action and the design"—the concern of much Hebrew religious thought, but again the tendency to straight-plane flatness intrudes . . . . Roditi is a learned poet (his recent book on Oscar Wilde just about floored the critics of the critics), a megalopolitan, a poet of many cultures and languages, but the poetry is often, puzzlingly, missing.

WITH A. M. Klein, the Canadian poet, the author of *The Hitleriad* and *Hath Not a Jew,* and easily the best artist of these three, we come upon a craftsman of the finite and particular, working in strictly delimited forms (not the sonnet or the sestina), forms determined by a clean and yet luminous scrutiny of the thing observed, an artist who has turned against the baroque dynamism of much modern poetry influenced by Gerard Hopkins and Dylan Thomas. His best poems are "observations" closer in method to the poetics of James Joyce than to Marianne Moore, and proceed from a blend of modernism and regionalism, the two sides of his "bilinguefact." Of Montreal, he writes:

Grand port of navigations, multiple
The lexicons uncargo'd at your quays,
Sonnant though strange to me; but chiefest, I,
Auditor of your music, cherish the
Joined double-melodied vocabulaire
Where English vocable and roll Ecossic

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Mollified by the parle of French
Bilinguefact your air!

Mr. Klein's new work is an example of the modern regional artist who has been more successful in finding a subject, or at least a goad for working, than his rootless "alienated" big city brother. (The cases that immediately come to mind are the Southern school around Ransom, Warren, and Tate and novelists such as Walter Clark.) Reading most of these poems for the first time, one hears many of the modern echoes, but they are worked in cleanly, inseparable from the poem, rising with the poem. In "Krieghoff: Calligrammes"

These must be spun, these must be bled
out of the iris of the intent sight:
red rufuous roseate crimson russet red
blank candid white

recalls Rimbaud's sonnet, "Vowels." When we see "doors grated: wooden stairs: the incunabulate dreams/Stacked"—we are almost certain that the poet is "remembering," at the moment of composition, Crane's "Faustus and Helen." And this stanza of "Pastoral of the City Streets" might not have been written if Pound's *Cantos* did not exist:

Comes a friend's father
with his pet of a hose
and plays the sidewalk black
cavelike and cool.

From these poems one gains the conviction that it is possible for the poet, if not to change his actual position as a kind of exile, or poor pariah outside looking in (a condition which, at its worst, is modified into modishness), at least to gain a little health through the regional deviation that takes the best of modern work along with it. This does not mean "a return to the soil" in any irresponsible utopian sense, but a Rilkean praising of things as contrasted with the dead-end difficulties of the "subjective" work that never escapes the self of the poet, does not communicate. Perhaps it means the weighting, heavily, of the first half of Eliot's formula of the "objective correlative." In the present instance we have Montreal, the rocky locale, the mountain, snowshoers, grain elevators, the lone bather, and so forth. Klein is said to be working on a study of Joyce. His "Lone Bather" is certainly an excellent example of the Joycean "epiphany," the sudden "showing forth" of the aesthetic object; a process which, to simplify, can be compared to a slow-motion film that permits firmer entry into the object and releases a kind of enchantment, vis-a-vis the object, that reveals the inner quality, meaning, or wholeness of the thing—its selfness. Here is the first stanza of "Lone Bather."

Upon the ecstatic diving board the diver,
poised for parabolas, lets go
lets go his manshape to become a bird.
Is bird, and topsy-turvy
the pool floats overhead, and the white tiles
snow
their crazy hexagons. Is dolphin. Then
is plant with lilies bursting from his heels.

It is possible to read into an isolated sensibility, such as Klein's, the fact that he is a Canadian Jew: his separateness, his "differentness" as a child made perhaps for long and lonely looking, etc. . . . But all this is the inevitable process of the artist, no matter whom, and properly exists now in the work beyond dredging, and has established for him the necessary "psychic distance" from the material.

IF LAST is the position of honor in an omnibus review, then it belongs to David Ignatow. That he is a poet at all is a modest but encouraging testament to the resiliency of the poet in a difficult place and time. He lives honestly at the bottom of a world and manages to make poetry out of it. But it is a healthy bottom, far below fakery and the "literary world"; and though it has been said of Ignatow that he is the kind of poet who may confuse art with artifice, we'll take the chance. He is a poet the hard way, whose considerable spiritual sweat in the tenements and on the streets of the East Side actually shows through the work, giving it an honest rugged stink that we would recognize as genuine anywhere. While our mainstream of poets has been graduating from Harvard, Oxford, and Vanderbilt University—teaching literature, defining culture—Ignatow has been at work with not much more

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than himself, the East Side, and the prosody of Whitman. Within these limitations, and they are severe, he has achieved a decent colloquial simplicity. Living among the cultural proletariat, he confronts the wild gargoyle, himself, in the mirror:

My neighbor
growls at himself in the mirror;
puts thumb to nose in derision
and whispers, "Go kill yourself, you're crazy."

Trying to center himself in the crisis created by the modern cultural fellahin, the "locked out" poets and artists, Ignatow is one of those many young Jews who have left middle-class homes (his mother in the poem, "Story," asks: "Where will it get you?") to sit down in the Greenwich Village ghetto and the East Side. This can be an act of love, as we see from the poems, and not a flight from responsibility. Many of these emigrants go under, go wild, go blank, but Ignatow's achievement is that he is making poetry of this. And, as our critics might say, this is a good cultural phenomenon because it points to the irreducible nature of poetry, a response to a test and strong recuperative power—even if the tools are only Whitman's "Song of Myself" and a distrust of a wider area of art than the immediate thought and emotion. We are convinced Ignatow is writing meaningfully a certain kind of truth that strikes home to most of us, particularly in "Tenderness":

Into the dark tunnel I went
to which they bid me: into sportiveness
and daring sin against my tenderness:
into indifference and deliberate attacks.
I loved as they intended, and laughed.
I was with all, and was forgotten as any other.
Out of the tunnel I crept, no longer myself,
without tenderness, without love,
with knowledge and sorrow,
too tired to kill, killed too often in return.
Willing to wait, hoping to love by armed truce.

There are many faults in this: an outmoded diction that is too inclusive and relaxed—Ignatow is content only to state, when he should be looking for words and rhythms that will state it for him and eliminate much; he uses a prosody of yesterday, but the honesty makes it poetry.

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The Brighter Middle Ages

THE JEWS IN MEDIEVAL GERMANY: A STUDY OF THEIR LEGAL AND SOCIAL STATUS. By GUIDO KISCH. University of Chicago Press. 655 pp. $7.50.

Reviewed by ALFRED WERNER

THE picture of the German Middle Ages has been twice falsified and distorted by scholars, though in each case for different reasons. The historians of the Enlightenment painted the centuries preceding the Reformation as a completely dark age so that it would furnish a somber background against which the modern period of tolerance might stand out in all its brightness. The Nazi historians, on the other hand, glorified the Middle Ages and purposely stressed and misrepresented its Judeophobia in order to justify Nazi anti-Semitism. Now Dr. Kisch, who taught the history of law at the University of Halle prior to Hitler's assumption of power, and who was subsequently on the faculty of New York's Jewish Institute of Religion, seeks to clarify and understand German-Jewish rela-

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tions in the past. Insisting that every age is best mirrored in its laws, the author tries to give us an unbiased view of Jewish life in the medieval German towns by closely examining the Jewry-laws, that is to say, the laws enacted for the Jewish minority by the Gentile majority.

Judging by the German Jewry-laws, at least by those promulgated before the middle of the 13th century, the legislators were relatively humane and even enlightened persons. Whatever Nazi race fanatics claimed to the contrary, Jews were not considered "unassimilable aliens"; they were outside the Christian community only inasmuch as they had rejected Jesus. Whatever antagonism against the Jews existed was caused partly by religious bias and partly by economic jealousy, but never by any "racial" hostility. "We must respect their humanity and not their unbelief," the preamble to a medieval charter for the Jews read.

Another *Rechtsbuch*, published as late as 1503 or 1504, when anti-Jewish feelings had long been on the increase, still boldly asserted: "One should not impose on the Jews too heavy and unseemly a lot, one should tolerate them among Christians, but not extend this treatment to heathens, according to ecclesiastic law." One law-maker was even "modern" enough to understand that the Jews, barred from virtually all occupations as they were, "must engage in usury, and this is their excuse. But Christian usurers have no such excuse, since they do it out of greed and because of their abandon and malice."

According to the most famous medieval law code, the Sachsenspiegel, Jewish law-breakers were treated just like Christian offenders—it was only towards the end of the Middle Ages that ignominy and extra pain were added to the punishment of Jews. Dr. Kisch maintains that, according to Saxon law, Jews for a long time were even permitted both to pass judgment on everyone and act as witnesses. Under certain conditions, e.g. when mixed courts handled disputes between Jews and Christians, or when a Christian had to seek justice against a Jew exclusively in a Jewish court, Jews were allowed to "perform judicial functions affecting the interests of non-Jewish litigants."

Nowhere does Dr. Kisch claim that the conditions under which the Jews lived were ideal. Still, for centuries they lived in relative security and freedom within their Jewish quarters, except for occasional outbursts of mob violence. When, from 1938 onward, the Nazis established ghettos for the Jews in their realm, they hypocritically defended their action by pointing to the wisdom displayed by their ancestors who allegedly had confined the Jews within the *Judengasse*. Actually, however, Jews voluntarily occupied a special section of the town more or less in the same manner as, for instance, butchers or shoemakers would congregate in special areas: "There can no longer be any doubt that the separation of the Jews from the general settlements in medieval cities had its origin in the free will of the early Jewish settlers and by no means in compulsory measures imposed on them. Such measures would be absolutely contrary to the alluring conditions of settlement offered at times to Jewish immigrants, such as those included in the old Rhenish Jewry privileges."

How and why, then, did the status of the Jews dismally deteriorate in the course of the centuries so that the respected merchants of the Carolingian era came towards the end of the Middle Ages to be regarded as undesirable outcasts?

Dr. Kisch finds two reasons for this sad metamorphosis. In the first place, the Jews, as merchants, originally performed a necessary and much-valued task which gradually, as the country progressed, was taken over by the Christians. Secondly, in the growing tension between state and papacy the latter saw to it that the Jews were segregated lest they seduce Christians to forsake the true faith.

The special garb for Jews originated only in the 13th century, and the yellow badge was not enforced upon them before the 15th and 16th centuries. Previously, one of the greatest medieval jurists, Eike von Repgow, author of the tolerant Sachsenspiegel, had bravely thundered against the Crusaders who had committed numerous anti-Jewish atrocities. By the time of Eike's death (about 1233) the Jews were still considered freemen; gradually, however, they lost the important right to bear arms, and consequently their original status. Through clerical influence the fatal myth of the Jews having been sold into captivity after the fall of Jerusalem crept into the law books; as *servi camerae nostrae* they ended up as bondsmen, belonging, with their persons and possessions, to the Imperial Chamber.

Professor Kisch points out a particularly flagrant example of what Solomon Schechter once

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termed "higher anti-Semitism": anti-Semitic scholars and pseudo-scholars have claimed that an old medieval trade privilege, according to which Jews could acquire stolen goods and were permitted to demand compensation if the object were reclaimed by its legitimate owner, originated in the Talmudic law. This *"Juedisches Hehlerrecht"* was destined to achieve prominence in the Nazi propaganda, yet actually "not a shadow of scholarly proof has been adduced either for the Talmudic origin of this principle or for its intentional or general application in a criminal way by medieval Jewry."

Furnished with hundreds of notes, a lengthy bibliography, and several indexes, *The Jews in Medieval Germany* is an admirable product of *Gelehrtenfleiss*. With its implications for the recent past, it will be welcomed, not only by the scholar, but also by the general reader to whom it will demonstrate how humane the 13th-century Germans were so compared with their Nazi heirs in the 20th century.

The Last Aesthete

AESTHETICS AND HISTORY IN THE VISUAL ARTS. By BERNARD BERENSON. Pantheon. 260 pp. $4.00.

SKETCH FOR A SELF-PORTRAIT. By BERNARD BERENSON. Pantheon. 185 pp. $3.00.

Reviewed by MEYER SCHAPIRO

MR. BERENSON, who is a great connoisseur of Italian art, has said that there are two kinds of experts in painting, the contractionists and the expansionists. The first are very strict in accepting a work as by the hand of a master; it must not only be shown to have issued from his workshop, but it must exhibit his personal touch in the smallest details. The expansionists are more generous and easy-going; since the style and conceptions of a master are transmitted to his students and assistants, any work that shows clear enough traces of his art may be judged to be his own, even if not executed entirely by his hand.

In the days when Berenson was justly famous for his uncanny skill in spotting the authors of pictures, he was a stubborn contractionist; how many museums and private owners of masterpieces were humbled by his keen attributions which forced them to change their labels from Titian to Palma and from Palma to Amico di Nessuno! In recent years, when there have been fewer great works to authenticate, Berenson has become more lenient. Around 1930, he declared himself for expansionism.

In *Aesthetics and History in the Visual Arts*, which is a theoretical grounding of aesthetics and history *ueberhaupt*, he attempts to justify his newly-found expansionism rationally. What a surprise then for the reader to discover here that the inhumane contractionism which Berenson had expelled from his study of Italian painting has re-entered his thought in a more vulnerable and important spot, the general theory of art and the judgment of the great historic styles!

BERENSON feels very strongly that modern man has been enjoying too many different kinds of art; whereas in the 1880's, cultivated people discovered true masterpieces only in Greek and Renaissance art, and a few more daring ones admitted the Gothic, today we are swamped by an utterly unprincipled aesthetic expansionism. Everything is admired: the art of troglodytes and African savages, archaic Greek works, early Christian, Byzantine, barbarian, Scythian, Chinese, and Mayan art, and worst of all, contemporary art. This tendency is rotting our civilization. It is one of the sources of Nazism and the general moral and intellectual confusion in which we now find ourselves.

We have heard like warnings and lamentations from other writers, but unlike them Berenson has both a logical theory and a remedy. As a self-declared humanist and rationalist, he is able to deduce the cause, the symptoms, and the cure from self-evident first principles. Art is by nature life-enhancing and humanizing. It is life-enhancing through the ideated sensations which we experience through the work of art.

For example, a beautiful modeled nude figure, Greek or Florentine, stimulates our tactile sense and gives us a heightened, but ideated sensation of the body's weight, articulation, and movement. "Whatever is regarded as art in all ages has tactile values." Now it is a fact that nothing is so capable of stimulating our tactile sense as the image of the nude human body, and the frontal standing body most of all. Hence the greatest art is that which is occupied with just this kind of figure. It is not surprising then to find that when artists lose the ability to represent the nude figure, art declines disastrously. This is what happened in the early Christian

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period and again during the last fifty years. Like the early Christian artists, the modern artists do not know how to draw; or they have been misled by dealers and perverse collectors to sacrifice their knowledge to impure, unartistic ends.

There is a second and no less important line of reasoning. Art is not only "decoration" (Berenson's word for the artistic complex of tactile values, space composition, and the movement of lines), it is also "illustration," by which he means imagery or represented subject-matter. Illustration, too, has its axioms and rigorous laws. To be life-enhancing, illustration must show beautiful and noble beings; it must influence life for the better by projecting ideal human figures and situations which will inspire the beholder to model himself upon them. Thus in the 1880's, the young women tried to look like the figures in paintings by Burne-Jones, in the 1890's Botticelli provided the models. What can a young woman safely venture to resemble in contemporary art? Given the principle of "identification" (the artist has "to oblige the spectator to feel as if he were the object represented and to imagine its functional processes"), we can see why Berenson must feel uneasy even with Cézanne and Degas, in spite of their tactile values (those dreadful laundresses and washerwomen!), and why he must condemn modern art; identification with it on his ideal terms would be exceedingly distressing: he would have to feel like a cube or a tangle of lines, and undergo in ideated sensation the organic distortions of some very strange objects indeed. The situation is desperate.

Amidst the general decline of our age, three powerful, ruthless men, Stalin, Mussolini, and Hitler, have repudiated modern art and its unhealthy exoticism and have restored the perennial tactile values through heroic, frontal, erect, nude figures. There they stand, in the Parks of Culture and Rest, in the great stadia and palaces of glass, those magnificent, sturdy, naked figures which teach the Russian, German, and Italian people how to stand and how to carry themselves as perfect Communists, Nazis, and Fascists. What a terrible thing to recall to Mr. Berenson, who was born in Vilna and who regards art as the "surest escape from the tedium of threatening totalitarianism"!

HAPPILY, his ideas about art are not altogether so forbiddingly classicistic and reactionary as would appear from the passages maliciously excerpted from these two books by a reader prejudiced in favor of degenerate art. Take, for example, Berenson's favorite notion about tactile values. This is an advanced theory of the 1890's, when German aestheticians taught that the aesthetic was a physiological experience of empathy, that we lie down with a horizontal line, stand up with a vertical and squirm or shake with spirals and sine curves. It is what some philosophers call a "subjectivistic" theory and has been condemned by austere rationalists like Julien Benda as a typical Belphegorian perversity, foreign to the great tradition for which beauty is an impersonal, intellectual thing, a matter of proportions calmly contemplated, and not a capricious cohabitation with an image by the sensation-hungry spectator. Benda would surely reject as a modern heresy Berenson's aesthetic in which proportion is allowed only one small paragraph and the concept of structure is strangely absent. And severe classicists, fighting a rearguard action against subjectivism and the cult of the individual, would also have to reproach him for devoting the larger part of his life as a critic to problems of attribution, that is, to the discernment of the individual in the paintings of a given time and place, a preoccupation that has a heavy responsibility for the individualistic madness in modern art. They would observe also that when Mr. Berenson in his old years wishes to write about himself, he chooses the indefinite form of a "sketch for a self-portrait," preferring, like a true son of modern decadence, to contemplate himself at random and to suggest his formless reveries rather than to compose an objective, old-fashioned autobiography in which the life-happenings fall into a definite order and build a clear image of character, action, and circumstance.

And he is right in doing so. We owe to this choice a beautiful picture of old age, some of the finest pages of Berenson's prose. When he talks about others, we feel a lack of warmth, and when he tells us that "the dominant tendency of his mind" is "indignation against injustice" and that "every [avoidable] evil drives me wild," we are somehow not convinced. But we cannot help being stirred by the deeply felt avowal of joy in living. "All ambition spent," he looks upon the world as intrinsically good; every sensation and perception is a piece of life and therefore precious. The aesthetic here becomes a touching morality and vitalizing of old

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age, a time when the individual, released from struggle and desire, lives well in simple enjoyment of nature and art, delighting also in the spectacle of humanity, which had once been distasteful, and affirming his faith in man.

In this pure aesthetic hedonism of his old age, Berenson rejoins his earliest impressions and the ruling impulses of his childhood and youth. Then, too, his will to happiness was founded on the magic of the visual. He recalls the original keenness of his senses, the ecstasy of first encounters with nature and art, the joy of living in color, sound, and touch, which determined his dedication to the arts. An extraordinary receptiveness to artistic impressions governed his youth. Walter Pater was his god. He dreamed of a higher role, as a philosopher as well as critic of the arts; but he gradually slipped into the groove of connoisseurship and became an expert in Italian Renaissance painting. This he deeply regrets because it diverted him from his original aim, although he admits, too, that the work and authority were always a source of pleasure and gave him, besides, the material independence that he values and without which he could hardly have lived as he wished.

Reading the volume on aesthetics and history, which summarizes his life's thought, one cannot share his doubts about the choice; his thinking is not that of a philosopher or of a critic deeply concerned with principles and consistency, but of a man of taste, whose intelligence is at the service of his impressions. He is no systematic mind, as he himself forewarns the reader, and his ideas present too many loose ends, too many contradictions and improvised judgments to satisfy a philosophical or scientific mind. But what he has to say about his experience of quality and his insight into the accomplishment of an artist is very often striking and just, and reveals in the fulsomeness and force of the statement a strong personality, sovereign in its field.

Perhaps the spiritual shallowness of the culture-conscious social milieu in which he thrived, a milieu searching for a lost paradise of beauty and nobility and increasingly detached from the problems of modern life, was responsible for the stagnation of Berenson's virtuoso thought. His capricious judgments of what springs from an outlook other than his own betray the limitations of his idea of the life-enhancing and humanizing. He wants art and man to be beautiful and to overcome the irrational, animal nature; but he is unaware, or insufficiently aware, of the depths of the human struggle towards self-mastery, freedom, and creativeness, its innumerable secret ties with institutions, events, and everyday life, and of the presence of the human, in its good sense, in vulgar experience and in the life and arts of the less civilized peoples. He has made of his own life a work of art inspired by a Victorian aesthetic conception, a true flower of Pater's ideal. But we sense in it a finickiness and snobbery, a moral blindness to large regions of life (perhaps inseparable from so predominantly aesthetic an ideal), which have cut off this great student of art from important sources of insight.

Book Reviewers in this Issue

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COMMENTARY
is printed by
THE COMET PRESS, INC.
200 Varick Street, New York 14, N. Y.
WAtkins 4-6700
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Printers of fine booklets, books, and publications

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